



## International Federation of Automatic Control

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**Alberto Isidori**

**President**

January 12, 2009 er

To: National Member Organizations

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Six months have passed since I took office as President of IFAC in July 2008. With this letter, I wish to keep you up to date with recent developments within the Federation.

2008 has been a landmark year for IFAC. The 17<sup>th</sup> World Congress in Seoul has marked an all-time record in terms of submissions, presentations, attendance and technical standing. The vision and leadership of Professor Kwon, the impeccable organization and warm hospitality offered by the Korean colleagues, the outstanding work of the Program Committee and of thousands of volunteers, all have contributed to an enormous success, which will be long remembered in IFAC's history.

2008 also marked the official start of the activities of the IFAC Foundation. Thanks to Prof. Kwon's generous initial endowment, the Foundation has been put in the condition of offering travel aid to young authors from less privileged countries, to the purpose of attending and presenting their work at the IFAC world Congress. Overall, 31 candidates from 17 countries have already received support from the Foundation.

The year 2008 has also marked the official start of the new web-based electronic publication scheme for Proceedings of IFAC Technical Meetings, which we now have learned to call IFAC-PapersOnLine. The progress made is impressive. Enormous energies have been put into the project by its Editor-in-Chief, Juan de la Puente, by the IFAC Secretariat, and the outstanding technical support and advice offered by Pradeep Misra. All this has made it possible to reach goals that nobody dared to imagine at the beginning of last year.

By the date of this letter, only six months after the official opening of the site, this web-based repository comprises proceedings of 41 Technical Meetings, including the last three World Congresses. Overall, a total of about 10,500 technical papers are archived. Out of all Meetings held in the triennium 2005-2008 of which IFAC is the main sponsor, IFAC-PapersOnLine now archives Proceedings of 20 Symposia (83 % of the total), 5 Conferences (45 % of the total) and 11 Workshops (42 % of the total). This is already a tremendous improvement with respect to the earlier paper publication scheme, in which only Proceedings of Symposia were regularly published. But, above all, the main feature of IFAC-PapersOnLine is that papers are available for free download by individual researchers. By the date of this letter, there are already more than 2,500 registered users of IFAC-PapersOnLine. Beginning with January 2009, IFAC-PapersOnLine papers will be indexed by Elsevier's citation database *Scopus*

The incoming Technical Board, in its Seoul meeting, has expressed the wish that the Proceedings of all earlier IFAC Technical meetings be eventually archived in IFAC-PapersOnLine. This is a gigantic project, encompassing an estimated number of more than 65,000 papers, and entailing substantial costs which can only be covered if appropriate sponsors are found. A task force is currently at work with the task of evaluating options, finalizing a plan of operations, and seeking prospective donors.

Technical excellence is IFAC's main concern. In a world in which the dissemination of information has become a possibility for everybody, maintaining the highest technical level of scientific excellence is the only way in which an organization like ours can prosper. Technical excellence is reflected in the leadership of our outstanding Technical Board and in the high quality of our Technical Committee Chairs.

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**Alberto Isidori, Universita di Roma "La Sapienza"**  
**Dipartimento di Informatica e Sistemistica**  
**Via Ariosto 25, I-00185 Rome, Italy**  
**Tel +39/06/7727 4053, Email [alberto.isidori@ifac-control.org](mailto:alberto.isidori@ifac-control.org)**



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Routine activities of the Technical Board and Technical Committee can count on a web-based support which will now be fully integrated within the IFAC website. New templates for Technical Committee homepages have been developed and the appropriate software tools have been made available to the Technical Committee Chairs. The Technical Committee homepages are being gradually populated. The system administrator at the Secretariat has also been working on a complete re-development of a web-based system for meetings evaluation and approval. This system, which will be fully integrated with the current IFAC database and software, will be operational by March 2009 and will provide an invaluable help to the Technical Board in its daily activities. At this moment, 35 events are already approved for the year 2009 (28 of which are main-sponsored by IFAC) and 12 events (all Symposia) are already approved for 2010.

Technical excellence and visibility of IFAC scientists, engineers and educators is pursued, among other things, by the IFAC Fellow program, which acknowledges persons who have made outstanding and extraordinary contributions in the field of interest of IFAC. The deadline for nominations for election to IFAC Fellow in 2009 has just expired, and the Fellow Selection Committee is at work to prepare a proposal which will be evaluated by the Council.

In its 2009 meeting, the Council will make a preliminary evaluation of the expressions of interests, from NMOs, to host the 20<sup>th</sup> IFAC World Congress in the year 2017. A circular letter has been sent to this extent to all NMOs, with the deadline for answers given as April 1, 2009. Based on these expressions of interest and brief presentations, the Council will solicit complete formal proposals from a limited number of NMOs for full consideration.

As determined at the Council meeting in Seoul, this year's Council and Related Meetings will take place in London, upon invitation of the United Kingdom NMO, from June 24 to June 26. Find attached a preliminary meeting schedule for the London meetings.

Let me use this opportunity also to wish all of you a prosperous, successful and healthy 2009.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alberto Isidori".

Alberto Isidori

cc: IFAC Council