Welcome Message from the General and Executive Chairs

Declan Ganley   **Linda Doyle**   **Brendan Jennings**

On behalf of the Organisation Committee, we extend you a warm welcome to the 2020 IEEE International Conference on Communications (ICC 2020). The conference was scheduled to be held at the Convention Centre Dublin, Dublin, Ireland from June 7th to 11th 2020. All three of us, along with the Organisation Committee members who are part of CONNECT, Ireland's national research centre for Future Networks and Communications, were very much looking forward to welcoming our friends and colleagues from all over the world to Dublin. Unfortunately, the global pandemic means that this is not possible this year, but we hope to meet you in Ireland in the years ahead.

When it became apparent that we would not be able to meet in person this June, the decision was quickly made to move the conference online. For a conference of the scale and complexity of ICC this has proven to be an onerous task. Thankfully, the Organisation Committee received tremendous support from colleagues at the IEEE Communications Society to make the move online work. We would like to acknowledge the help and advice we received from Prof. Vincent Chan (President), Prof. Stefano Bregni (VP, Conference), Prof. Lawrence Wong (Director, Conference Operations), members of the GIMS and GITC committees. In particular, we thank the Comsoc staff, who collectively made a huge effort to transition the conference to an online format. A special note of thanks goes to Melissa Torres, the Comsoc Senior Conference Planner, who has worked with us on the conference preparations for the past three years, and who has done an immense amount of work dealing with the practicalities of hosting the conference virtually.

The theme of ICC 2020 is "Communications Enabling Shared Understanding." Originally this theme was chosen by us to highlight the ultimate impact of the research work done by our community: making it easier to deliver the communications services that draw us together in our community. This theme is especially resonant in a country like Ireland, which in the last decades went through a peace process in which cross-community communication played a key role. Little did we know, that this theme would prove hugely relevant during the global pandemic we are currently experiencing, during which online communications has become critical to all professional and personal facets of our lives.

Whilst the move online has been our main focus this year it is important to acknowledge that the conference has been in preparation for a much longer period. This preparation has relied on many volunteers from across our community, from Organisation Committee members, Symposia Chairs and reviewers, Workshop organisers reviewers, Tutorial presenters,

Industry speakers and panellists, keynote speakers, student volunteers, and of course the Comsoc leadership and staff. We offer our sincere thanks to all involved for helping us on this journey.

We hope that participation in the online conference proves to be a rewarding and stimulating experience for you. As we say in Gaelic, *Céad Míle Fáilte!* (A Hundred Thousand Welcomes!)

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