



On behalf of the Executive Committee, and in particular the General Co-Chairs, I would like to welcome you all to the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual IEEE International Symposium on Personal, Indoor and Mobile Radio Communications.

This is the fourth time that PIMRC has been held in London. The last time was in 2000, and before that was in 1991. The very first PIMRC, initiated by Professor Hamid Aghvami, was organized by and took place at King's College London in 1989, and it is fitting that King's should also organize the event this year. So it is a pleasure for me to welcome PIMRC back to London and especially to King's College.

In 1991 I moved from Racal Research to a Racal spinout telecommunications company based in the small market town of Newbury, some 60 miles west of London. That company was Vodafone. Vodafone, along with its competitor that today is part of Telefonica and operates in the UK as O2, had one of two licenses to operate mobile communications in the United Kingdom, it had a customer base of less than a million subscriptions, and it was just preparing to migrate them from its analogue system, known as TACS, to the new pan-European digital system called GSM. Today Vodafone is one of the three largest companies in the UK, with a presence in more than 50 markets, Telefonica occupies a similar position as a Spanish company with a global footprint; whilst GSM, and the systems that have evolved from it, are used by some 5 billion people across our planet every day of the week.

As remarkable as the story of mobile communications has been, we are still only on the first phase of the journey. Now that mobile communications and the Internet have fused, I believe we are at the beginning of a new era of telecommunications, an era where every person, every organization and every device will be permanently connected and communicating. Just as was the case with traditional telecommunications, the Internet will become personalized so that you will be part of it wherever you are, telecommunications itself will become entirely contextual and, as machines become ubiquitously connected, control will provide a new dimension to the design of communications networks.

With that in mind, this is a great point in time for a major international conference on telecommunications that brings together academics, entrepreneurs, business leaders and administrators from around the world. Therefore it is with great pleasure that I look forward to greeting you all here in London in September for the IEEE PIMRC13.

On behalf of the General Co-Chairs  
**Professor Michael Walker**  
Vodafone Fellow

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