Dear Members of the ICSE Community:

In early March, as concerns about the surfacing of multiple cases of COVID-19 in South Korea arose, we made a decision to reschedule ICSE 2020 to October, with the additional agreement to revisit that decision on July 5 and choose an alternative location or delivery method if that seemed warranted.

While it is not yet July 5, the COVID-19 situation around the world has clearly changed in major, (and for many persons, sadly, catastrophic) ways. It looks increasingly unlikely that a physical conference held in October could be conducted with sufficient assurances of safety, particularly when a large percentage of those involved would need to travel in order to take part. There are also financial concerns that must be considered. It is not clear that a conference held physically in October could succeed financially; indeed, if we go forward further the hotel we become obligated for a portion of our deposit regardless of outcome.

Ultimately, coupling our concerns for the safety of members of the ICSE community with our responsibility to be good stewards of the funds that our sponsors (ACM, IEEE, and the Korean Institute for Scientists and Engineers (KIISE)) must guarantee to provide if ICSE 2020 goes forward physically, we have determined that it no longer makes sense to attempt to proceed with a full physical conference in October.

For these reasons, the ICSE 2020 Emergency Response Committee (ERC) has decided that ICSE 2020 will be held, to as large an extent as is possible, virtually. Moreover, rather than wait to hold ICSE 2020 virtually in October, at a time when several other software engineering conferences are also due to occur, we've moved the plans for ICSE 2020 forward to early July. We expect to hold events related to the main technical program from July 6 to July 11, and the week after the 11th is available for use by any co-located events or workshops that wish to hold virtual events in temporal proximity to the technical program. It is our hope that in doing this, we can provide members of the ICSE community with a welcome and (in our opinion, much-needed) opportunity to interact with each other, sooner rather than later.

We have formed an "ICSE 2020 Virtualization Committee", which is being chaired by Crista Lopes, to explore options for holding ICSE virtually, to design a new, "Virtual ICSE", and to provide support for the participation of the ICSE community in such an event.

There are many logistical questions that remain to be solved in order to take ICSE 2020 virtual in July, and we hope you can be patient while we work to address those. We hope to be able to provide complete information on the Virtual ICSE 2020 event by the end of May. However, there are several things that we can tell you about right now:

1. *Providing a Physical Presence for ICSE 2020 in South Korea.* Given the relative success of South Korea in managing COVID-19, and given the large number of South

Koreans who have participated in the organization and planning of ICSE and had hoped to attend it, there *will* be a physical "ICSE 2020" event in South Korea during the July 7-17 timeframe. This event will be open *to anyone who wishes to attend it*. Indeed, the July timeframe is chosen because at that time, meeting space will be available at no cost in Korean Universities. The physical ICSE 2020 event will incorporate some ICSE 2020 sessions, but in a manner that also supports and facilitates participation by those in the ICSE community who wish to take part in the Virtual ICSE.

2. *Co-Located Events and Workshops*. We will be in touch with the General Chairs of all Co-Located Events, and all ICSE Workshops soon to discuss particular courses of action they may wish to take.

3. *Proceedings*. The ICSE 2020 proceedings are still on track to be published late in May or early in June. These proceedings will contain all of the papers and other materials planned for the original proceedings, including papers accepted to Workshops or Co-Located Events that had chosen to relocate, physically, with ICSE.

4. *Registration.* We will be instituting a new registration process with fees that are reasonable and appropriate to the different levels of participation in the virtual conference that will be available to attendees. Details will be posted on the ICSE 2020 Registration page as soon as possible -- we are aiming for a June 1 registration opening.

5. *Registration refunds* Anyone who registered for the May conference, or who has since registered for the October conference, is entitled to a full refund of their payment with no penalty. Instructions for doing this are available on the ICSE 2020 web site. If you are able to wait until after June 1, the registration system should be able to process your new registration fee and refund any balance.

6. *ICSE 2021.* There is nothing in our decision that carries any implications for future ICSEs and we sincerely hope that ICSE 2021 can continue as planned in Madrid.

We hope that you can join us for a new, "Virtual Experience" of the flagship software engineering conference -- the International Conference in Software Engineering -- in July.

Sincerely,

The ICSE 2020 Emergency Response Committee:

  Gregg Rothermel   (ICSE 2020 General co-Chair)
  Doo-Hwan Bae   (ICSE 2020 General co-Chair)
  Jane Cleland-Huang (ICSE 2020 Technical Program co-Chair)
  Darko Marinov   (ICSE 2020 Technical Program co-Chair)
  Laurie Williams   (ICSE Steering Committee Chair)
  Tom Zimmerman   (SIGSOFT Chair)
  Rick Kazman   (IEEE TCSE Chair)
  James Peeples   (ACM)
  Silvia Ceballos   (IEEE)