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HONDA INTRODUCES "HUMAN" ROBOT

Tokyo, Dec. 20, 1996 -- Honda Motor Co., Ltd. today announced the development of the first robot capable of decision-making according to terrain conditions.

The battery-powered robot, with two arms and two legs, is capable of changing direction according to conditions, as well as climbing stairs or slopes. It also can balance itself automatically if pushed, and keeps itself upright according to the angle of a slope.

The maximum battery operation time for the 180cm (6-ft.) tall, 210kg (462 lb.) robot is 15 minutes.

Its autonomous control process means that there is no need to input detailed walking process instructions prior to operation. The robot's walking direction, including U-turns, also can be changed by radio remote control.

Such characteristics make it possible for the robot to perform tasks such as pushing a cart and tightening bolts.

Honda CEO Nobuhiko Kawamoto called the robot "one of our most challenging technical themes, which has great potential. We intend to continue development, to see how we can use this technology for practical use."

Today's announcement is the latest development in Honda's ongoing robotics research, which has been pursued for several years.

Since the summer of 1996, Honda also has been involved in a project led by the Agency of Industrial Science and Technology (AIST) to develop next-generation robotic technologies.