



19th ICSMGE in Seoul, South Korea

September 17-22, 2017
Reported by Ir. YEE Yew Weng

Email: mgs@mygeosociety.org
Website: www.mygeosociety.org

Malaysian Geotechnical Society
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The 19th International Conference on Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering (19th ICSMGE) was held in Seoul from Sept 17-22, 2017. The Conference, which is geotechnical engineering world's premier event, is held every 4 years. The Conference was opened by former Secretary General to the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, who extolled the gathering that, "I strongly believe that geotechnical engineering is the key to solving natural and manmade disasters, derived from conflicts between man and nature...". Following this, over 1952 participants from 82 countries, deliberated over 947 papers, 627 lectures and 320 posters. 22 delegates have Malaysian passports.

World renowned experts like Peter Day (South Africa), David Wood (UK), Mark Randolph (Aust), John Powell (UK), Delwyn Fredlund (Canada), Antonio Correia (Por), Indraratna (Aust) presented plenary lectures, together with 196 Workshop Sessions made up the exciting scientific program.

It was noticeable that ICSMGE tried to bridge the divide between academia and practitioners; and between the developed world and developing countries. There was a good mix of theoretical papers and case history accounts; and latest research from the West and sustainability issues in the East. The atmosphere and direction of the conference could not be summed up better than the opening Terzaghi Oration, delivered by Consulting Engineer Dr. Peter Day from South Africa. He explained in 7 key statements:

1. Most geotechnical problems are not caused by lack of knowledge but by failure to apply available knowledge & failure to recognize critical design situations.
2. Our ability to create knowledge far outstrips our ability to translate this new-found knowledge into practice.

3. Creation of knowledge and its implementation in practice are equally important to our profession.
4. The consolidation and application of existing research findings should enjoy the same recognition in academic circles as new research efforts.
5. Practitioners and academics should see themselves as part of the same team.
6. Meaningful quantitative analysis of geotechnical problems cannot take place without adequate site investigation and reliable data.
7. There are geotechnical problems that are not amenable to theoretical analysis using classical soil mechanics methods.

He ended by quoting Terzaghi, "*To acquire competence in the field of earthworks engineering one must learn to live with the soil. One must love it and observe its performance not only in the laboratory, but also in the field, to become familiar with its manifold properties.*"

Overall, the Conference was very well organized. From the opening day's ceremonial drum performance to the closing day's opera rendition, the event was no less than world class. The committee acknowledged the financial support provided by 61 sponsors and 68 exhibitors. The organizers of the 20th ICSMGE in Sydney has been set a high bar.

MGS was represented at the Pre-conference Council Meeting by Ir. YW Yee and A.Prof. Dr. Dominic Ong. A new Board took over the helm of ISSMGE at the conclusion of the 19th ICSMGE, as Prof Roger Frank handed over the hammer of power (literally) to the new President, Prof Charles Ng (Hong Kong). Vice President of Asia is Prof Shin (Korea), whilst Prof KK Phoon (Singapore) has been appointed to the Board.



ISSMGE President Prof Charles Ng with MGS President Ir. YW Yee



Ir. Yee YW delivering a lecture on "Foundations in Ex-Mining Ground near Kampar, Malaysia"



Kevin Nash Gold Medal awarded to Prof Antonio Gens (Spain)



ISSMGE New Board 2017-2021



19th ICSMGE Main Conference Hall at Coex Centre, Seoul



Typical Lunch Boxes during Conference