



**ISSMGE FOUNDATION  
REPORT ON CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE**

<b>Your Name:</b> Heriberto Echezuría	<b>Your Organization:</b> Sociedad Venezolana de Geotecnia (SVDG)	<b>Date of report:</b> 09/06/2018
<b>Conference Title:</b> COBRAMSEG	<b>Location of Conference:</b> Salvador, Bahía, Brasil	<b>Dates of Conference:</b> 08/28-09/01
<b>What you learned:</b> I found out information about the following items regarding ISSMGE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New System for article reviewing for ISSMGE Online library</li><li>• New webinars, organized as courses for ISSMGE, hearing for proposals</li><li>• Touring Lecture “Códigos de diseño para fundaciones” to be held in 3 places: Paraguay (12 &amp; 13 Noviembre), Argentina (15 &amp; 16 Noviembre) and México (19 Noviembre 2018). Hearing for other countries interested for 2019.</li><li>• Online ISSMGE library, ABMS ofrece subir los artículos de sus congresos nacionales.</li><li>• Sede del próximo congreso panamericano</li><li>• Chile has been proposed to hold the next Panamerican Congress SMGE. The LATAM group met in Salvador unanimously supported this proposal</li><li>• Need to promote and propose a Young Geotechnical Congress in South America.</li></ul> Also, professionally I found out interesting articles regarding several topics of Geotechnical Engineering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Past lessons and perspectives for the geotechnical engineering: Very interesting articles about Geotechnical Engineering Teaching and Learning experiences in Brasil</li><li>• Environmental Geotechnical Engineering</li></ul>		
<b>People you met:</b> I have the opportunity to meet several colleagues who belong to the Boards of the Geotechnical Societies from Latin America: José Pavón (PY), Daniela Pollak (CL), Paulo Orostegui (CL), Ricardo Rocca (AR), Roberto Terzariol (AR), Alejo Sfriso (VP), Alessander Kormann (BR), Nicolás Zabrodiec (PY), Carlos Rodríguez (CO)		
<b>Main features of conference:</b> This was the XIX Brazilian International Congress on Soil Mechanics which was held along with other four events in parallel: VIII Brazilian Symposium on Rock Mechanics IX Luso Brazilian Geotechnical Congress V Panamerican Landslides Symposium VIII Brazilian Young Geotechnical Engineers Symposium There were a variety of themes among the different events, but the main theme of the congress was Geotechnical Engineering in Urban Development.		
<b>Your comments on the conference:</b> Large variety of themes which evidence the dedication to provide innovative solutions to problems and commitment with research in Brazil and some Southamerican countries. There were also good main conferences delivered by well known international experts in different topics.		



***Please attach short report (maximum 400 words) suitable for publication in the ISSMGE Bulletin:***

The ISSMGE is making an important effort to incorporate all countries from Latin America (LATAM) in the activities it sponsors. This is a necessary step considering that in some of our LATAM countries there has been a serious reduction of professionals undertaking the Geotechnical Engineering as their Major field of knowledge.

The aforementioned situation starts from the university where less and less Civil Engineering Students are selecting the speciality in Geotechnical and it is not clear if it is a consequence of the reduction of job places for Geotechnical Engineers in the market place or is a lack of attractiveness or motivation to such a working field by the active Professors or practicing engineers or a combination of both. However, it appears not to be as serious in Brazil as in the rest of LATAM countries. In fact, only Brazil has around 1800 active professionals in Geotech which is a number larger by far than the numbers of the rest of LATAM countries. Thus, I saw with much interest that the COBRAMSEG included a section for Social Geotechnical Engineering which covered areas related to education but also to increasing the attention of young students and novel graduated civil engineers to incursion in the Geotech field. This is an area we should look carefully and start taking steps toward improving our numbers of active professionals.

There is another problem somewhat related to the previous one presented which is related to the content of the Soil Exploration Studies in some LATAM countries. In this regard, it is notorious that our field is been treated as if we represent a “trauma” to be withheld only once!! Thus our professionals are forced to predesign foundations without any due information about equipment, in the case of plants, or real loads of buildings. This becomes critical in large projects which involve Engineering, Procurement and Construction which handle the engineering in three steps, i.e., Conceptual, Basic and Detailed. It is common that this type of projects ask the geotechnical Engineer to submit with the Soil Exploration Report (that is, at the very beginning and with no due information) the dimensions of foundations including footing, slabs and piles!! It is usually requested as “recommendations for foundations”. This kind of practice disregards the fact that foundation design requires dedication and thinking and should not be part of a soil exploration report, but of the engineering ours of the design.

I am very sure that other fields of Civil Engineering, particularly Structural, will not accept yield a predesign at the beginning of the project with incomplete information from which another engineer could either extrapolate or interpolate to complete a design for a Detailed Engineering. However, I have experienced myself this type of situation from large Consulting firms performing important projects which try to justify this approach saying that they do not have Geotechnical Engineers in their staff. I insist that the time required to design a foundations for a Detailed Engineering, even for the geotechnical conditions only, requires time and acute consideration of all the aspects associated to guarantee its sound design and appropriate behaviour, particularly in seismic locations.

I invite the LATAM and other Geotechnical Societies to look into the problems I have raised herein regarding education, attractiveness of the Geotech and due performance in engineering and foundation design for the good of our profession as Geotechnical Engineers.

***Photographs from Conference:*** Insert here or attach to email