ISSMGE FOUNDATION
REPORT ON CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

Your Name: Jagadeesh Kumar Janga	***Your Organization:*** University of Illinois Chicago, United States of America	***Date of report:*** July 9, 2026
Conference Title: 21st International Conference on Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering	***Location of Conference:*** Vienna, Austria	***Dates of Conference:*** June 14-19, 2026

What you learned:

I attended several keynote lectures, Technical Committee (TC) Honor Lectures, and technical sessions and poster presentations on numerical modeling and machine learning in geotechnical engineering. The keynote and TC Honor Lectures provided valuable perspectives on emerging challenges and future directions for the profession.

The numerical modeling sessions highlighted recent advances in modelling various aspects of subsurface including liquefaction, seepage, slope stability, and other coupled subsurface processes. The presentations on machine learning applications provided valuable insights into how data-driven techniques are being applied to address geotechnical engineering problems, including prediction, optimization, and surrogate modeling. These sessions have given me an understanding of current research trends and provided ideas that are directly relevant to my ongoing research on integrating coupled-process modeling and machine learning to simulate various aspects of municipal solid waste landfills.

People you met:

The conference provided an excellent opportunity to interact with faculty members, early-career researchers, and industry professionals from around the world. Some of the distinguished individuals I had the opportunity to meet include:

ISSMGE Leadership
Prof. Lyesse Laloui (President, ISSMGE)
Dr. Marc Ballouz (Past President, ISSMGE)
Dr. Anil Joseph (Vice President for Asia, ISSMGE)
Ashe Cooper (Member, ISSMGE Young Members Presidential Group)

Internationally Recognized Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Experts
Prof. Andrea Dominijanni
Prof. Buddhima Indraratna
Prof. Catherine Mulligan
Prof. Takeshi Katsumi
Prof. Liu Songyu

Prof. Dimitrios Zekkos
Prof. Anand J. Puppala
Prof. A. Bhoominathan
Prof. G. Madhavi Latha
Prof. S. K. Das

Early-Career Researchers and Industry Professionals
I also interacted with numerous Ph.D. students and early-career researchers from leading universities in India, Japan, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In addition, I met assistant professors from universities worldwide and engineers from major consulting firms such as WSP and Keller. These interactions led to valuable professional connections and opportunities for future collaboration.

Main features of conference:
The conference included numerous technical sessions, with presentations categorized into technical, poster, and e-poster sessions, totaling over 1,200 presentations according to the conference website. In addition, several keynote, honor, and invited lectures were delivered by esteemed experts from across the world. The conference also provided numerous opportunities for networking through social events, including the welcome dinner and the Young Members' dinner. Additionally, the opportunity for ICSMGE attendees to visit the Karl Terzaghi Archive at TU Wien was one of the main highlights of the conference.

Your comments on the conference:
ICSMGE justified its reputation as the world's largest gathering of geotechnical engineering professionals. I particularly appreciated the numerous networking opportunities that came with attending such a large international conference. The invited, keynote, honor, and Bright Spark lectures, along with the technical sessions, broadened my knowledge and gave me a greater appreciation for the breadth of the field. On a personal note, I also thoroughly enjoyed the city of Vienna, which was a fitting location to host such a significant conference during the 100th anniversary of modern soil mechanics.

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

The 21st International Conference on Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering (ICSMGE 2026) in Vienna provided an excellent opportunity to engage with recent developments in geotechnical engineering and interact with researchers and practitioners from around the world. With more than 1,200 technical, poster, and e-poster presentations, together with keynote, invited, Honor, and Bright Spark lectures, the conference showcased the breadth of ongoing research and practice across the profession.

During the conference, I attended several keynote and Technical Committee Honor Lectures, as well as technical sessions and poster presentations related to numerical modeling and machine learning in geotechnical engineering. The numerical modeling sessions highlighted recent advances in simulating liquefaction, seepage, slope stability, and other coupled subsurface processes. I was particularly interested in the sessions on machine learning, which demonstrated the growing application of data-driven approaches for prediction, optimization, and surrogate modeling in geotechnical engineering. These sessions provided valuable perspectives and ideas directly relevant to my doctoral research on integrating coupled-process modeling and machine learning for municipal solid waste landfills.

I also had the opportunity to present my research as an e-poster and discuss my work with conference attendees. Beyond the technical program, one of the most valuable aspects of ICSMGE was the opportunity to interact with geotechnical and geoenvironmental engineering researchers, ISSMGE leadership, early-career researchers, and industry professionals from across the world. These interactions allowed me to learn about research being conducted at other institutions, exchange ideas, and develop new professional connections.

The conference also offered several social and networking events, including the welcome dinner and Young Engineers' event. A particularly memorable experience was the opportunity to visit the Karl Terzaghi Archive at TU Wien and view materials documenting the history and development of modern soil mechanics.

Overall, attending ICSMGE 2026 broadened my understanding of current research directions in geotechnical engineering, provided new perspectives relevant to my research, and enabled valuable connections within the international geotechnical community. I am grateful to the ISSMGE Foundation for its travel support, which helped make my participation in this conference possible.

Photographs from Conference:











