

Report from a Member Society

The Ghana Geotechnical Society

S. I. K. Ampadu, President of Ghana Geotechnical Society

Introduction

The Ghana Geotechnical Society (GGS) has been in existence for at least three decades. In the seventies and eighties, it was very active and had a fruitful collaboration with the Canadian Geotechnical Society. However in the nineties it went through a doldrum. Over the past several years it has received a new lease of life and activity. It currently serves as the specialty group of Geotechnical Engineering of the Ghana Institution of Engineers (GhIE) with twenty-one regular active members. The past few years have witnessed considerable improvement in the activities of the society. During this period the Society has reviewed its constitution and bye-laws and held two successful annual general meetings and elected its leadership. This report gives a summary of some of the main activities the society has organized over the past two years.

ISSMGE International Seminar in Accra

In February 2009, the Ghana Geotechnical Society with the support of ISSMGE successfully hosted an international seminar on *ground improvement* in Accra, the regional capital of Ghana. It attracted sixty six (66) participants including three from Nigeria. The participants came from academia and from industry. ISSMGE provided four resource persons consisting of the Past President, Prof Pêdro Seco e Pinto of the University of Coimbra in Portugal, the Past Vice President for Africa, Prof. Mounir Bouassida of the National Engineering School of Tunis and two members of TC17: Prof George Heerten of Germany and Mr. Serge Varaksin, Deputy General Manager of Menard Group, France and Chairman of TC 17. These were complemented by three Ghanaian speakers made up of Prof S.I.K. Ampadu of the Civil Engineering Department of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and President of GGS, Dr M.D. Gidigasu a renowned expert on lateritic soils, and Togbui Kporoku III a Director of Conterra Ltd, a private Geotechnical Consulting firm in Accra. The seminar was concluded with a field trip to the sea defense works in Keta on the southern eastern sea coast of Ghana.



Figure 1. Participants at the Sea Defense structure on the South Eastern Sea Coast of Ghana

2010 Annual General Meeting

On 30th of June 2010, the Society held its annual general meeting. The meeting was attended by 14 members. The meeting discussed various issues and the followings were elected as officers for the next two years:

1. President - Prof S.I.K. Ampadu
2. Secretary - Mr. Joseph K. Oddei

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3. Treasurer - Mr. Kweku Mensah Solomon
4. Member - Mr. Gordon Van-Tay
5. Member - Mr. J.F. Pinkrah
6. Southern Rep - Mr. Emmanuel Odai
7. Northern Rep - Mr. Mike Konadu

Hosting of TC-107

The Ghana Society is hosting TC-107 the new ISSMGE Technical Committee on laterite and lateritic soils. Prof. S.I.K. Ampadu is the Chairman of the Technical Committee and Dr. Mrs. Celestina Allotey is the society's representative on the committee.

Earthquake Workshop

Even though southern Ghana is known to be seismically active most domestic buildings in Ghana are not engineered and not seismically designed. For the structures that are engineered, there appear also to be a lack of consensus on the seismic design code and the existing ground motion characterization. To address these shortcomings a number of measures are being undertaken including seeking for international partners to address these anomalies. A multi disciplinary workshop was organized in Accra on November 11th 2010 to assess the status of earthquake preparedness in Ghana. The Ghana Geotechnical Society in association with a number of organizations took part in the workshop. The society members contributed by making presentations on the *state of earthquake ground motion characterization in Ghana, and soil characterization and their effects on buildings during earthquakes*.



Figure 2. Participant contributing at Earthquake workshop on 11th November 2010

Other News

The President of the Ghana Geotechnical Society, Prof. S.I.K. Ampadu, has been appointed Provost of the College of Engineering of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. Prof. Ampadu conducted both his MSc and PhD studies in the late eighties and early nineties in Geotechnical Engineering at the University of Tokyo in Japan. His PhD studies focused on the behavior of kaolin clay in torsional simple shear for which he conducted pioneering studies into very small strain measurements in clayey material in the laboratory.

Ghana Makes History

On 15th December history was made in Ghana. Ghana for the first time became an oil producing country and started pumping oil in commercial quantities from its oil field 65 km offshore in the Atlantic Ocean.