Report on the 16th Southeast Asian Geotechnical Conference (16th SEAGC)

By : Engr. Dr Ooi Teik Aun, *F.I.E.M., P.Eng.*

The 16th Southeast Asian Geotechnical Conference has recently concluded in Kuala Lumpur in a suburban township known as Subang Jaya. The Conference was attended by the President and the Vice President for Asia of the International Society for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering (ISSMGE), Professor Pedro S. Sêco e Pinto and Professor M. R. Madhav. It was well attended by about 500 participants from 23 countries. The Honourable Minister of Housing and Local Government of Malaysia, Y. B. Dato' Ong Ka Ting who was the guest of honour, declared opened the 3-day Conference with one day of site visits.

Y.Bhg Dato Paduka Engr. Keizrul bin Abdullah, President of Institution of Engineers, Malaysia, Y. B. Dato' Ir. Annies bin Md. Ariff, Deputy Director General of Public Works Department, Malaysia, Professor Pinto; Professor Madhav and Professor K. Y. Yong, the President of the Southeast Asian Geotechnical Society (SEAGS) gave their addresses at the conference.

Traditionally, the Southeast Asian Geotechnical Conference (SEAGC) is held on a regular basis of approximately once in 3 years with the venue rotated among the member countries of the SEAGS. The 16th Southeast Asian Geotechnical Conference is held for the fourth time in Kuala Lumpur in the 40-years history of the Society. Previous Conferences held in Kuala Lumpur were in 1975, 1985 and 1996. This Conference has one Opening Keynote Address, one Chin Fung Kee Lecture, 8 Keynote Lectures, 4 Special Lectures, 5 Special Session Lectures and 11 technical sessions with about 130 papers. The theme of the Conference is "Geotechnical Innovations in Practice, Tsunami and Debris Flow". A forum on the conference theme was held before closure of the conference technical sessions. There were active discussions from the floor. Post conference proceedings will be published in due course. All participants are encouraged to send in their discussions within 3 months from the date of the close of the conference. A farewell Banquet was held with cultural performances on 10 May 2007 to reward the Keynote Lecturers, Special lecturers, authors and participants and others who have in one way or another contributed towards the success of the conference. A cake cutting ceremony was also held at the banquet to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Society. The President of ISSMGE played on active part in the conference sessions, meeting with SEAGS Council Members and participated in the ISSMGE Technical Committee meetings.

The Chin Fung Kee Lecture is a Prestigious Lecture instituted to commemorate the achievements and contributions of the late Professor Chin Fung Kee who has served as President of the Society and also as Vice President for Asia of the ISSMGE.

The Southeast Asian Geotechnical Society (SEAGS) was founded in 1967 by Dr Za-Chieh Moh, who gave the Opening Keynote Address.

The SEAGS is 40 years old and a Special Commemorative Volume on the development, advancement and achievements of geotechnical engineering in Southeast Asia is published together with the Conference to celebrate the event. Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan are members of the Society. Hong Kong who was a member of SEAGS also took active part in the conference.

The Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Bangkok has contributed much towards the achievements of the society where the operational Headquarters of the Society is located since its inception. Professor A. S. Balasubramaniam and other Past Presidents and the President of the Society have all contributed much towards the success story of the Society.

In recent times, there has been increasing incidences of natural disasters such as Landslides and Flooding; the incidences of Tsunami and Tremors in Malaysia are related to the seismic activities of Indonesia. As a result of these natural disasters, ISSMGE has formed a Technical Committee for the Mitigation and Rehabilitation of Natural Disasters known as TC39. A Special Session Lecture has been incorporated in this Conference for this emerging area of interest. TC39 held its meeting during the conference. Ground Improvement has an important role in the development of the Southeast Asian region and therefore TC17 also held its meeting during the conference. The SEAGS is a member of the ISSMGE while The Institution of Engineers, Malaysia (IEM) is a corporate member of the SEAGS.

This Conference is jointly organised by the SEAGS, the IEM and the Public Works Department of Malaysia and supported by the Construction Industry Development Board of Malaysia, Nehemiah Reinforced Soil Sdn Bhd, Tourism Malaysia, Konsortium LPB Sdn Bhd, TenCarte (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, Keller (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd and many others including the Institution of Engineers, Hong Kong.

The registration fee was kept at a very affordable level so that all those who wish to attend the Conference could benefit. In recognition of the contribution from the authors of the papers, very special rate has been accorded to them. The hard bound Conference proceedings containing about 1000 pages, the 40th Anniversary Commemorative Volume of the SEAGS and the bound volume of the Professor Chin Fung Kee Memorial Lecture Series 1991-2006 were given to all participants.

The Conference was successfully held with the strong support of the Keynote Speakers, Special Lecturers and authors, the support of the Co-organiser, the Sponsors, Supporters, Exhibitors, Advertisers, the Participants and the Organising Committee.

The General Committee Meeting of the SEAGS accepted the invitation from Taiwan to host the next SEAGS Conference in Taipei City in 2010.

The meeting also elected Dr Chung-Tien, Chin as the New President of SEAGS for session 2007/2010. ■