

# My Vision for ISSMGE

*Life is better when others are happier because of you*



The International Society for Soil Mechanics & Geotechnical Engineering, **ISSMGE**, was founded in 1936, by Karl Terzaghi, the father of modern geotechnics. The society has

experienced a rapid growth since that time and now comprises 90 member societies with around 30,000 individual geo-professional members. This growth has been matched by increasing activities, largely through the establishment of many Committees and Task Forces. The ISSMGE board is composed of 12 members including the president. Elections are held at the official ISSMGE conference every 4 years, called ICSMGE. The upcoming elections are going to be held at the 20<sup>th</sup> ICSMGE conference on May 1<sup>st</sup> in Sydney Australia.

I was simultaneously nominated as candidate for the presidency of ISSMGE by the national societies of the USA (Geo-Institute) and of Lebanon (LGES). My nomination was based on my experience in serving the profession as an ISSMGE board member (2013-2017), and as the current Governor of the Geo-Institute, and on my extensive professional experience. I have ambitious plans not only to maintain the dynamic ISSMGE activities but also to introduce new ideas for the improvement of geotech and its image worldwide. My vision for ISSMGE can be summarized as follows:

- **Members:** I will use the valuable input (expectations, concerns, & suggestions) of the representatives of each country member to improve and shape ISSMGE for our present day and the future. I will contact countries that are not yet represented and support them in establishing a national society and to then join the ISSMGE family. I will encourage all member societies to be more active nationally and internationally on the ISSMGE platform by attending conferences, joining committees, publishing articles in ISSMGE newsletter and journal, attending the virtual university, etc... My priority is to enhance their enthusiasm and contribution by reducing the membership fees for those who are active, which will benefit the societies in troubled countries (war, embargo, economic collapse..). I will regularly publish progress reports to keep members abreast on current society news and progress.
- **Committees:** ISSMGE has 6 Board Level Committees (BLCs), namely the IDC, TOC, PIC, AC, CAPG, & YMPG, in addition to the 39 Technical Committees (TCs) including 2 regional committees covering the different aspects of geotechnical engineering. These committees represent the battle horse engaged in surpassing the hurdles towards the progress of ISSMGE and in improving the quality and image of the profession worldwide. I plan to create a new Board Level Committee tasked to connect theory and research to practice and contracting, to coordinate between the TC chairs, TOC and CAPG, thus creating a forum with the goal of closing the gap between both sides of the spectrum.
- **Continuing Education:** The recent launching of the Virtual University which includes organized courses, lectures, webinars, and short videos, covering many aspects of geotechnical engineering, is a great ISSMGE achievement especially with free access for all geo-professionals for continuing education. I plan to go even further with the IDC to make it a true online specialized university that would be devoted to student engineers and geo-professionals by issuing certificates recognized globally.
- **Young Engineers:** They are the future of the profession! I will encourage young geotechnical engineers to be active, enhance their inter-action with ISSMGE leadership, attend the Virtual University, join technical committees, and be the dynamos in their respective member societies. For me, if we do not listen to the novice engineers, we cannot make the future of geotech better fast enough.
- **Geo-Engineers without Border:** It was suggested long ago! I know the ISSMGE can play a major role in dispatching experts to help developing countries when faced with geo-hazards and disasters.
- **Image:** Have you ever seen a movie where the hero is a civil/geotechnical engineer? We improve and save more lives than lawyers or doctors for example, yet the image of our profession is not well represented worldwide. I will work hard with the PIC to make more people globally know who we are and what we do. In parallel, I will show our contribution to sustainable construction rather than nature destruction.

In brief, I will connect regularly with all members to obtain their input. I will invite the chairs of the board level committees to the ISSMGE board meetings, so together as one family, we can try to resolve all issues encountered, and implement innovative ideas. Ultimately, through My Vision, I will strive to make all geo-professionals happier!