



A MESSAGE FROM VICTOR F.B. DE MELLO:

It is with warmth and enthusiasm that I send this personal message to the forthcoming Ninth Asian Regional Conference, Bangkok 1991, in a revisiting experience 20 years after the Regional Conference's first venue, 1971, in the center of magnetic attraction that is the Asian Institute of Technology. At this opportunity of assessing problems, production, and perspectives over the 20-year span, I note as primary the fact that the S.E.

ASIAN SOCIETY has served as a singular and exemplary Group Member Society of the ISSMFE, and the A.I.T. as one of the lighthouses of southern hemisphere and tropical geotechnical engineering, serving the far-flung and multi-billion populated explosively progressive Asian Region.

As I look back at my 44 years of delightful worldwide associations within and through our geotechnical family, from India, through the Cambridge (U.S.) "hub-of-the universe", to South America, Europe, Africa, Middle East, Russia, Australia, and the world-embracing Asia, I cannot but reemphasize the zest at foregoing the lures of homogeneization and standardization, in learning to delight in our differences. Differences geological and ecological strike inquisitive minds with a tantalizing equivalence of curiosity, and diversity of effects: specialization is differentiation, and development sprouts from clashing-concerted, rejection-attraction, by specializations. The standard, if any, is of a matter-of-fact muted pride in differences pried by culture, history, and the inexorable chronology of growth, as a resignation to youth unfettered, challenging the domineering world of communications to continue as a boon in lieu of aging into a bond.

Free is the mind and creativity, unshackled from the understanding bondage of direct imitation. Let us forth, with the ingenious engineering of infinite benefit/cost ratio, aided by the vagaries of serendipity in the realm of intuitions and the commonest of sense: let us be guarded from the railroaded engine engineering, frequent sequel to the promise of the engine itself.

On leaving, one should always have some measure of incompleteness, to proud one's memories, aims, and hopes to return. A.I.T., Bangkok, the SE-Asian Society, and the extremes of sparkles and of massive drones of the Asian Region, always assure us the perennial yearning to return. May you preserve through the next 20 years the rich seductions of such youthful spirit and mature accomplishment.

Best wishes and kind regards

Victor F.B. de Mello