

## UFMG HOSTS A GLOBAL EVENT

**D**uring the week of August 17-23, 2000, UFMG in conjunction with several governmental institutions and engineering companies hosted many distinguished researchers, policy makers and corporate officials from 41 countries at the 5<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Environmental Engineering and Global Sustainable Development (ISEGGSD). Brazil was selected four years ago to host this symposium in the year 2000 in recognition of its important position among nations on the issue of global sustainable development. It can be recalled that Brazil was the venue for the 1992 Rio United Nations Summit on the environment, which laid the foundations for the development of environmental infrastructure support systems by many countries.

Various parts of the world were striving to develop and/or adopt technologies that are appropriate to their needs. The catalogue of environmental problems and their control opportunities is large. Environmental problems, regardless of their sources, can impact upon ecosystems and human health regardless of international boundaries. Just to state a few examples: about 43% of the earth's vegetated land surface has diminished capacity to support benefits to humanity due to recent, direct impacts of land use; in the developing and underdeveloped countries, less than 62% of the population has access to safe drinking water; and in 1998, the World Institute identified contaminated water as the cause of about 7% of all deaths world-wide.

Despite the high pollution potential associated with most human activities, infrastructure has to be developed to support an increasingly technological society and rapidly growing global population, which is now estimated at about 2.5 billion. Among these support systems are energy installations, civil construction, and municipal operations. This 5<sup>th</sup> Symposium enabled exchange and critique of techniques, ideas and policies that are prevalent in different geographic regions of the world. As a cross-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary subject, environmental geotechnology has high

utility in various sectors of sustainable development. This utility was reflected in this Symposium, by the coverage of issues such as mining and environment; agriculture and environment; energy systems and environment; waste recycling and re-use; ecosystem/site storage systems; containment migration and its control; groundwater quality; and sustainable development policies.

Some of the highlights of this Symposium were opening remarks Prof. Dr. Leo Heller (Dean of the Engineering College, UFMG), Prof. Ronaldo Barbosa (Dean of Graduate Studies, UFMG), Dr. Paulino Cícero de Vasconcelos - Environmental State's Secretary, Prof. Terezinha Cássia, Symposium Chair (UFMG), and Prof. Hylary I. Inyang, Symposium Co-Chair (University of Massachusetts, Lovell, USA). Three special forums on sustainable development attracted the participation of many people from a wide variety of institutions, disciplines and countries.

The International Society of Environmental Technology (ISEG) was formed during this Symposium. The international headquarters of ISEG will be based at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, NC, USA. At its inaugural meeting Prof. Hylary I. Inyang was elected President of ISEG.

The formation of the International Consortium of Environmental and Energy Research Institutes and Centers (ICEERIC) was also announced. This Consortium which will be headquartered at the University of North Carolina - Charlotte, USA, will facilitate research collaboration among institutes, corporations and agencies world-wide. Among the planned activities will be exchange of personnel and students, research collaborations, joint workshops and publications, and technical support to international agencies on environmental and energy issues. As part of the Symposium series, the next set of ISEGGSD Symposium will be held in Seoul, South Korea (2002), Helsinki, Finland (2004) and Abuja, Nigeria (2006). An international conference on new materials in environmental applications will be held in Tokyo, Japan in 2001.

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