



Mexico City, February 28, 2013

Dr. Garbiel Auvinet  
Carta Definitiva

**Dr Gabriel Auvinet for ISSMGE Presidency 2013-2017**  
**Request for letter of support from ISMMGE Member Societies**

Dear Colleagues,

As new President of the Mexican Society for Geotechnical Engineering (SMIG) for the 2013-2014 period, I want to confirm the following request and express my deepest gratitude to those of you who have already offered their support:

In the Council Meeting at the next ISSMGE in Paris 2013, new officers of the Board will be elected. SMIG proposes one of its most distinguished members, Dr. Gabriel Auvinet, as candidate for ISSMGE President for 2013-2017. We request your Member Society to endorse this candidacy, and ask you for a letter of support and your vote at the Council Meeting in Paris.

**About SMIG**

The Mexican Society for Geotechnical Engineering (SMIG), founded in 1957, has maintained throughout the years a tradition of excellence. Pioneers Nabor Carrillo, Leonardo Zeevaert and Raúl Marsal, to name only a few, are known worldwide for solving the difficult problems with the very soft clayey soils of Mexico City, and for their outstanding contributions to among others, earth dams, mechanics of granular media and soil dynamics.

SMIG also contributes steadily to the activities of the ISSMGE. Mexico City was the venue for the 1969 7<sup>th</sup> International Conference. The 1<sup>st</sup> Pan-American Conference was in Mexico City (1959) and the 9<sup>th</sup> in Guadalajara (1995). SMIG's most distinguished members, Raúl J. Marsal, Alfonso Rico and Guillermo Springall were ISSMGE Vice-Presidents for North America. Mexican geotechnical engineers continuously participate in ISSMGE Technical Committees, including TC36 (now TC214) "*Foundation in difficult soft soil conditions*", hosted by Mexico since 2000. SMIG is a vibrant ISSMGE Member Society, as witnessed by its 2012 National Meeting in Cancun, with several distinguished lecturers from abroad.

**Dr Auvinet, a worthy candidate for ISSMGE President**

Dr Auvinet is currently ISSMGE Vice-President for North America. He is Past President of the SMIG and Past Chair of the ISSMGE Technical Committee TC36. He is Research Professor at the Institute of Engineering, National Autonomous University of Mexico. His research on granular media, foundations and probabilistic approach in Geotechnics, together with many geotechnical projects in Mexico and abroad have made him one of the most respected members of our international geotechnical community. In 2002, Dr Auvinet delivered the Nabor Carrillo Lecture, the most prestigious geotechnical lecture in Mexico. Through his activities, he has built a strong international network. His ethics, dedication and clear vision will be strong assets for achieving ISSMGE's mission: the promotion of international cooperation among engineers and scientists for the advancement and dissemination of knowledge in Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering.

**Request for letter of support**

We thank you in advance for the support that you will give to Gabriel Auvinet's candidacy as ISSMGE President. Please send us a letter from your Member Society supporting his candidacy, and please vote for him at the Council meeting in Paris in September 2013.

Best regards,

David Yáñez Santillán  
President 2013-2014  
Mexican Society for Geotechnical Engineering (SMIG)

# **Candidate for ISSMGE President**

## **Professor Gabriel AUVINET**

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### ***Continuity and New Momentum***

## **Professor Auvinet's vision for ISSMGE**

### ***Continuity***

The ISSMGE is the pre-eminent professional body representing the interests and activities of Engineers, Academics and Contractors all over the world within soil mechanics and geotechnical engineering.

75-year strong, the ISSMGE enjoys a good image and stature, strong reputation, and solid economy, thanks to its Presidents, Boards, Secretary Generals, Technical Committees, Member Societies and members. ISSMGE contributes significantly to satisfy the basic needs for infrastructure development of society. To remain on this path of excellence, ISSMGE needs to continue with scientific rigor, realism and engineering relevance, as defined by the founders of ISSMGE and reinforced by eminent Geotechnical engineers in the past.

During 2009-2013, a great effort was accomplished by the ISSMGE Board and its president Briaud to implement a new structure with new Student, Young members and Corporate Associates Presidential Groups and four new committees; Technical Oversight; Membership, Practitioners and Academicians; Public Relations, Innovations and Development; ISSMGE Foundation and Awards Committees). This ensured an improved ISSMGE involving a much larger number of members in the society's activities. As next president, I plan to maintain this new structure and to strive to make it function harmoniously and efficiently.

Running ISSMGE will require time and energy. I am ready as president to devote most of my time to ISSMGE during the coming four years. The majority of my professional and academic duties will be assumed by my colleagues.

### ***New Momentum***

To keep improving ISSMGE and its *modus operandi* and adapting it to our evolving profession, I will give priority to fostering scientific and technical advances and ensuring their dissemination within and outside ISSMGE. In particular, I will focus on the following 13 areas:

Technical Committees. ISSMGE's Technical Committees (TCs) are the strongest vehicle involving our members. Their mission should be clarified. Their main objective should be to establish a clear and compact state-of-the-art through review of literature, and organizing lectures, workshops and conferences. A reevaluation of the TCs rules and operation of the Technical Oversight Committee (TOC) will be done. TCs will be enabled to keep working in the ISSMGE President interim. Renewal of TC Chairs will be a continuous process based on the TC's performance. Information shall be made to flow seamlessly from TCs chairs to TOC and to Vice-Presidents and the Board. The creation of new TCs will be welcome as long as there is a need for them and people willing to champion them. The best TC Award will be continued.

Conferences. The International and Regional Conferences, with their professional and friendly content, will remain the main events of our Society. Specialized technical meetings will also be strongly encouraged. However, emphasis will be placed on relevance and quality rather than number of conferences. Conferences will also be better distributed among the six ISSMGE regions to ensure good and effective technology transfer.

Dissemination within and outside ISSMGE. The web page of our Society will become a hub with steady flow of information among members and potential users. It will include links to the key geo-journals, and academic and professional web pages and easy access to State-of-the-Art ISSMGE reports. The ISSMGE bulletin founded in 2005 will continue, as well as the "Geoworld" professional network.

International Seminars. I have a dream to inject a new impulse to International Seminars and Webinars. These initiatives also strengthen member societies in countries deprived of a well-established geotechnical group.

Presence of ISSMGE in the public eye. ISSMGE should be ubiquitous in the media, for example to present outstanding civil engineering achievements, discuss geotechnical risks or comment on natural disasters. Politics concerning relations with civil authorities should be discussed openly, and ISSMGE should be present in public fora. Ready-made videos/YouTube films should be prepared by our Public Relation Committee.

Journals. I will give full support to the ISSMGE Journal of Geo-Engineering Case Histories, encouraging wider participation of ISSMGE practitioner members, the sharing of case histories for teaching, and increased participation by the Technical Committees.

Membership. Increasing the ISSMGE membership and the number of member societies will be a strong priority. Every geo-professional should be an ISSMGE member. Professor Leonardo Zeevaert used to say “You must sell soil mechanics the same way you sell soft drinks”.

Students and young membership. Students and young members are the future of our society. They will receive my special attention, including e.g., internet/twitter ideas, technical contests during conferences and Young Members Conferences in all ISSMGE regions.

Corporate Associate members. A new synergy should be induced between Academia and Industry. The number of our Corporate Associate Members reflects the relevance of our activities to practical engineering and the prestige of our society. I will work to increase this participation.

ISSMGE Foundation. Contributions from individuals and corporate donors will be encouraged. They open new perspectives for ISSMGE for assisting young members and developing Member Societies in their quest for a full participation in ISSMGE activities.

Awards. Awards will acknowledge the merits of our more distinguished members, group of members and societies.

International Affiliations. Close relationships will be maintained with sister societies such as the International Society of Rock mechanics (ISRM) and the International Association for Engineering Geology and the Environment (IAEG), with the International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD), the International Geosynthetics Society (IGS) and the International Tunneling Association (ITA). The success of the Joint Technical Committee on Natural Slopes and Landslides illustrates the importance of technical cooperation among learned societies.

Official Languages. ISSMGE is proud of its two official languages. Speaking myself three languages, I know that other languages play an important role in our communication. I believe that it is important that ISSMGE facilitate the understanding of our contributions in other languages in addition to English and French. I will work for expanding the ISSMGE lexicon to other languages.

#### ***Appeal for new ideas***

Our members have many more interesting ideas on ISSMGE’s evolution. I plan to listen to both Member Societies and individual members, to learn how they perceive the ISSMGE, and how we can improve ISSMGE. This may start right away. Please send your ideas to me: e-mail: [gauvinetg@iingen.unam.mx](mailto:gauvinetg@iingen.unam.mx); office phone: +52(55) 56233600 ext. 8324; mobile phone: +52(55) 54122915.

When President, I hope to personally visit you in your home country, or I will ask one of our Vice-Presidents to visit you, in order to exchange points of view on our society. This is our duty as officers of ISSMGE. In 2012, as Vice-President of ISSMGE for North America, I visited 12 different countries. With the help of the Board and of all ISSMGE members, I intend to keep working with the same intensity as President of ISSMGE.

Gabriel Auvinet  
Candidate for ISSMGE President

## Professor Auvinet's background

Gabriel Auvinet was born in Cholet, France, in 1942. He received his Bachelor's degree from Ecole Spéciale des Travaux Publics in Paris in 1964. Attracted by the uncommon characteristics of Mexico City subsoil, he went to Mexico as a postgraduate student and earned his Master's degree in Soil Mechanics from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) in 1969. He received his Doctorate in Civil Engineering from the same University in 1986. He married his wife Monique in 1970; they have three children: Valérie, Cécile and Caroline. Gabriel speaks English, Spanish and French fluently, and understands German.

In 1970, Gabriel Auvinet became Assistant Professor at Institute of Engineering, UNAM, where he quickly progressed to Associate Professor and Tenure Professor. He served as Head of the Geotechnical Department, Institute of Engineering, UNAM. Assistant Director of the Institute and Head of the Civil Engineering Department of the Postgraduate Division of the Engineering Faculty. He currently leads the Geocomputing Laboratory of the Institute.

Professor Auvinet has a broad range of geotechnical interests, with research emphasis on the mechanics of granular media, special foundations in soft soils, the behavior of friction and point-bearing piles and rigid inclusions, analysis, design and construction of dams and artificial lakes and new techniques for the application of probabilistic and geostatistical methods in Civil Engineering. He was one of the first promoters of the application of the Stochastic Finite Element Method in Geomechanics, and he developed GIS models of the subsoil of Mexico. He managed over 190 researches. In 1999-2001, he was a consultant to the award winning Rion-Antirion bridge project in Greece. Presently, he is the main geotechnical Consultant for the "Tunnel Emisor Oriente" project, a 62km long and 7m in diameter tunnel. Professor Auvinet gave also a wide spectrum of courses both in Mexico and abroad. He has been named Honorary Professor by several South American Universities.

Professor Auvinet has published a number of books and book chapters. He is also the author of about 250 journals articles and conference papers, and 150 research reports. He has advised 49 Master and 12 Doctorate students.

He served as secretary, vice-president and president of SMIG, the Mexican National Society of Geotechnical Engineering. He also served as chair of ISSMGE's Technical Committee TC36 (now TC214) on Foundations in Difficult Soft Soil Conditions, where he organized several international symposia. He was a *Touring lecturer* for ISSMGE in countries such as Chili and Paraguay and has been invited as a keynote lecturer in many countries including Switzerland, South Korea, Canada, Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Perú and France

For his innovative contributions, Professor Auvinet has received the Lariviere award by CNAM, Paris, and, on several occasions, the Javier Barros Sierra award from the Civil Engineers College of Mexico. He also received the Jose Luis Cuevas medal from SMIG in 2002. As an acknowledgment to his outstanding contribution to solving some of the difficult geotechnical problems of Mexico City he was conferred the Mexico City Civil Engineering award (Premio Lieberman) in 2010 by the Mexico City mayor.

His experience in previous leadership positions and his demonstrated commitment to ISSMGE through nine years of chairing a Technical Committee plus four years as ISSMGE Vice-President North America, together with his strong bonds to South America and Europe, have prepared him well to be the next President of ISSMGE.

Gabriel is also a fan of history, especially history of Civil Engineering, and he is the author of books and book chapters on this subject.

A more detailed resume of Professor Gabriel Auvinet is available on the web.