



# The Nigerian Society of Engineers

PORT HARCOURT BRANCH



e-newsletter

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MAY, 21ST 2011

## Interview with Engr. Prof. Samuel U. Ejezie FNSE on Geotechnical Engineering Practice in Nigeria.

Professor Samuel Uchekukwu Ejezie FNSE, is the HOD of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Port Harcourt. He graduated as the best student of his set in 1977. In 1979 he proceeded to the United States of America for his Post Graduate studies. He got his Masters Degree in Civil Engineering from Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, in January 1982; and his PhD in Civil Engineering from Carnegie – Mellon University Pittsburgh PA, in 1984. His area of specialization is Civil and Geotechnical Engineering. Presently, he is a Training Consultant to SPDC and a Lecturer at the SIPT/I.



Engr. Prof. S. U. Ejezie FNSE

In professional activities, Prof. Ejezie is a **FELLOW** of the Nigerian Society of Engineers. He is a member of Council of NSE, Chairman of Geotechnical Engineering Division, member of the Young Engineers Development Committee and member Codes and Standards Committee. He is also a member of several international professional bodies, including the Deep Foundations Institute (DFI), American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), and Sigma Xi. He was recently elected and sworn-in as **Vice-President for Africa of the International Society for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering (ISSMGE)** in Egypt.

**E-Newsletter:** Sir, please tell us what Geotechnical Engineering is all about?

**Engr. Prof. Ejezie:** Civil Engineering is a very broad area, and we refer to Civil Engineering as the mother of all engineering. In fact if you recall or if I may have to tell you, originally, engineering was regarded as military engineering; it was like a military profession. As you can even see today, most of the outstanding achievements in Engineering were pioneered by the military, and in most cases those achievements were initially classified because they were mainly for military purposes. But after sometime, maybe ten years or more, there was this system of de-classification, and those achievements were brought out for civilian use, and that seemed apparently to reflect the origin of this appellation, the naming of that profession as “Civil” for civilian use, if you like and from that, Civil Engineering. Other areas of Engineering started springing up; from there you see areas like mechanical, electrical, highway, and so on and so forth, and they kept springing up as those special areas; those specialties grew in buttons and complexity. When you say, Civil Engineering, it embodies structural engineering which is the area that deals with super structure, Geotechnical Engineering or more appropriately, Soil mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering, which in other words is the ground engineering aspect of Civil Engineering. That is the aspect of Civil Engineering that deals with a sub-structure, the part of a structure that is below the ground surface. We also have Highway Engineering, Water resources engineering, all these are parts and parcel of Civil Engineering. As you know, my own specialty where I can be called upon anytime any day, and I will answer boldly without hesitation

is Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering. I can tell you, before you ask me other questions, like you said, people need to know more about this; Ground Engineering is the unique aspect of Civil Engineering which though not very visible, is the most critical as far as development of the constructing environment is concerned. The architect and the structural engineer are in charge of the super structure, you know, the architect draws, the structural engineer discretizes and analyzes; but remember, the super structure they come up with is like a load which must be carried by a medium, and that medium to carry that load must be properly engineered. Any error in the engineering of that medium that supports that load will spell doom; will mean catastrophe, so that is why we always spend extra time and effort to let people know that without Geotechnical Engineering, structures cannot successfully be erected on the ground, and if you don't erect structures on the ground, I don't know if you will erect them in the air.

**E-Newsletter:** What do you have to say about Geotechnical Engineering practice in Nigeria?

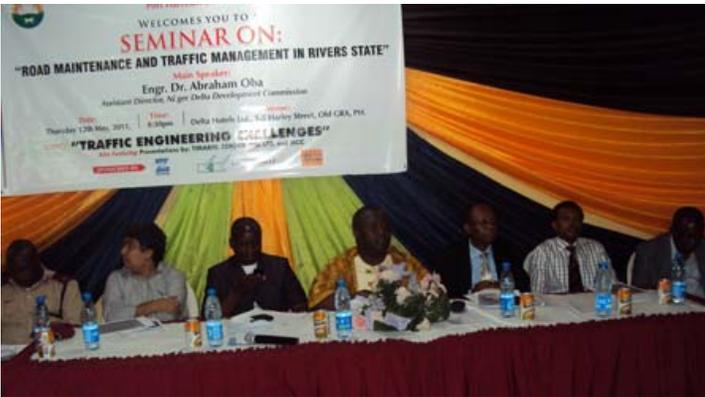
**Engr. Prof. Ejezie:** It is very much at its infancy. In fact, enough emphasis has not been placed on it yet, and that is the greatest challenge we face now in the profession in Nigeria. Most developers of property are interested in the super-structure, in fact they need extra education, and sometimes, very costly experience before they recognize that Geotechnical Engineering should be given more attention. If you watch what has been happening in most parts of the country, it is only when a building collapses you hear people talking about the soil texture, the Geotechnical Engineer; otherwise, even draughts men go ahead and prepare drawings and give to clients and they go ahead and start building without taking due precaution to make sure that the sub-surface medium that is supposed to support that load must be confirmed to be appropriate. If you pose a load over an area that doesn't have enough strength to carry that load, that structure must collapse. In Nigeria today, you don't need to go far to realize that Geotechnical Engineering is not paid adequate attention. Most people you see running around answering Geotechnical Engineers are even not the right people; they don't have adequate education and training for it.

**E-Newsletter:** Thank you very much sir.



Engr. Prof. S. U. Ejezie FNSE & Engr. Otunte Otuneh

**NSE PH Branch Seminar on "Road Maintenance and Traffic Management in Rivers State" Held on Thursday 12th May 2011 at Delta Hotels Limited., 1-3 Harley Street, Old GRA, Port Harcourt.**



L-R: Rep of FRSC Rivers State Command, MD of Zerock Nig. Ltd, Engr. Dr. A. Oba, Engr. B. H. Ogariawo FNSE, Engr. F. C. Ogolo FNSE, rep of TIMARIV & rep of Rivers State Commissioner for Transport



Engr. Mrs. A. C. Ohagwa MNSE (2nd left) during the 77th birthday anniversary & celebration of knee surgery of her mother (3rd right) on Sunday 24th April 2011.



Main Speaker: Engr. Dr. Abraham Oba, Asst. Director NDDC, giving his lecture



NSE PH Branch Technical Secretary, Engr. Precious Bob-Manuel (front) & some participants during the seminar

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Port Harcourt Branch

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**Date:** Monday 13th - Friday 17th June, 2011  
**Venue:** Prof. T. C. Nwodo E-library, Engr. Ishmael A. Banigo Secretariat, Water Works Yard, 3 Bernard Carr Str, Port Harcourt.  
**Time:** 9am - 4pm Daily

Registration forms are now available at the Venue (NSE Secretariat) and online: [www.nseph.org](http://www.nseph.org)  
Registration is strictly on first come, first served basis, limited spaces available. Register Now!

**ENQUIRIES**

Engr. Dr. A. H. Igoni, mnse Branch Chairman, 08023123471	Engr. G. C. Ikenyiri, mnse General Secretary, 08032856649	Engr. Precious Bob-Manuel, mnse Technical Secretary - 08054412655, 08033302175
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**NOTICE! NOTICE!! NOTICE!!!**

All members of NSE PH should pay their **Annual Branch Dues** of **N4,500** for **Corporate Members** and **N6,500** for **Fellows** to **UBA ACC. NO: 0234-031-0000962 (Port Harcourt Main Branch)**. Also pay **National Annual Subscription** of **N7,500.00** for **Corporate Members** & **N9,500** for **Fellows** directly to **AFRIBANK ACC No. 1420202215613** & forward all tellers to the secretariat for reconciliation. All payments should be made at the Bank