



South African National
Committee on Tunnelling

Spotlight

SANCOT 2015 Conference

The South African Committee on Tunnelling (SANCOT) held its annual conference from 23 to 24 April 2015 under the theme of 'Mechanised Underground Excavation in Mining and Civil Engineering'. The conference took place at the beautiful Zulu Kingdom, Elangeni Hotel in Durban, South Africa.

This conference was in response to the civil and mining industry being under immense pressure to deliver projects fast, efficiently, and as safely as possible. Mechanized underground excavation and support installation is proving to be an invaluable and cost-effective tool in project execution. Technology exists for the mechanized excavation of tunnels from as small as 300 mm to in excess of 18 m in order to access orebodies, build roads, railways, facilitate the installation of utilities, construct storage caverns for gas and oil, etc.

The conference was attended by various stakeholders involved with underground excavation, both locally and internationally, including the following:

- ◀ Shaft-sinking companies
- ◀ EPCM executives and management
- ◀ Civil construction companies
- ◀ Local municipalities and water authorities
- ◀ Engineering design and consulting companies
- ◀ Project management practitioners
- ◀ Technology suppliers and consumers
- ◀ University students.

Following the presentation of papers on 23 and 24 April, on 25 April delegates embarked on a technical site visit which presented them with the opportunity to walk through the tunnel underlying the Durban Harbour entrance, visit the adjoining pump station, and enjoy a one-hour cruise around the harbour.

From the point of view of the SANCOT Young Members' Group (SANCOT-YMG) technically, the conference was a success. It was most encouraging to see this youth forum receiving a warm welcome and support from all stakeholders at the conference. As already identified, young professionals can make valuable contributions in the civil and mining industries. SANCOT has made a commitment to support and encourage the participation of young professionals in all its organizational activities. This way, the young professionals are also able to make a meaningful contribution towards their academic, professional, and technical development.

Primarily, SANCOT-YMG's focus is to ensure that there is alliance and synergy, both with its mother bodies, which are SANCOT and SAIMM, and with other related organizations and professional bodies on various aspects that affect young professionals. This includes the execution of the mandate as adopted from the resolution taken at the International Tunnelling and Underground Space Association (ITA) General Assembly of 2014 in Iguassu, Brazil, which sets out the following aims:

- ◀ To provide a technical networking platform within the ITA for young professionals and students
- ◀ To bridge the gap between generations and to network across all experience levels in the industry
- ◀ To promote awareness of the tunnelling and underground space industry to new generations
- ◀ To provide young professionals and students with a voice in the ITA, including the Working Groups
- ◀ To look after the next generation of tunnelling professionals and to pass on the aims and ideals of the ITA.

As a representative of one of the 71 Member Nations in the ITA, SANCOT is expected to participate in all the Association's activities. What is of particular interest in the forthcoming ITA's international events is that, going forward, the young professional groups from each of the Member Nations will now be able to take part in the ITA's activities. SANCOT-YMG will also be taking part, and will be represented by its current chairman, Mr Lucky Nene, at this year's International Tunnelling and Underground Space Association Young Members Group (ITA-YM) session of the ITA's 41st General Assembly and Congress, taking place between 22 and 28 May 2015 in Dubrovnik, Croatia.

The upcoming annual meetings of the ITA General Assembly will be held at the following venues:

- ◀ Dubrovnik, Croatia: 22–28 May 2015, during the ITA-AITES WTC 2015 'Promoting Tunnelling in South East European Region'
- ◀ San Francisco, USA: 22–28 April 2016, during the ITA-AITES WTC 2016 'Uniting our Industry'
- ◀ Bergen, Norway: 9–16 June 2017, during the ITA-AITES WTC 2017 'Surface Problems – Underground Solutions'.

Young professionals in the tunnelling space, including those who would like to participate in general and offer assistance in the sustenance of this young professional forum, are invited to contact the SANCOT-YMG chairman directly on Lucky.Nene@aecom.com or via Raymond van der Berg on raymond@saimm.co.za.

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