

## Introductory remarks

Rafael Blazquez, Director of 10WCEE Steering Committee

Mr. General Director of the Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana, Mr. President of the International Association for Earthquake Engineering, distinguished guests, officers and fellow participants, ladies and gentlemen:

Four years ago in Tokyo, when Spain, more precisely Madrid, was designated official host of the 10WCEE, a continuous effort was initiated which culminates here today. From the time when the First World Conference was held in 1956, also in Japan, the interest all over the world for this engineering field and its areas of action has grown exponentially. Thus, during these 36 years that have passed since 1956 we have gone from 86 Conference



**Opening Ceremony: Prof. V.V. Bertero, Dr. Rafael Blázquez, 10WCEE Steering Committee Director and Prof. Giuseppe Grandori, President of the IAEE**

participants and 2 volumes of Proceedings to 1700 participants at this Conference and 11 volumes of Proceedings. All this has made the Steering Committee, of which I am honored to be the Director, carry out an arduous work in order to try to accommodate the largest possible number of received reports without harming their technical quality. It should be sufficiently clear if we just said that in its four years of existence, the Steering Committee (divided in 8 Subcommittees) met more than 40 times to, among other things, order and distribute the 1492 accepted abstracts (out of 2045 received) by 200 international reviewers. For those who are fond of statistics, I will say that these figures have finally been translated into 150 oral sessions and 8 poster sessions which will cover 17 different areas of research. Moreover, some innovative components have been introduced in the structure of the Conference such as two Keynote Lectures which will open and close this meeting as well as 10 State-of-the-Art Reports and 30 Invited Lectures which will be given within Technical Sessions and which have been prepared by distinguished researchers in different fields of Earthquake Engineering. Also, in parallel with the standard Conference sessions where will be a series of Special Theme Sessions organized in workshops coordinated by specialists aimed at discussing and debating, mostly in sessions not open to general public, issues of less general interest which require technical evaluation of scientific community or the International Association itself. As an example for this we have the latest document entitled "A Time for Action: World Seismic Initiative" which will be presented in one of these Sessions within the context of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

All these activities, which will appear summarized in the Post-Conference volume of the Conference Proceedings, represent the technical aspect of the Conference, its central axis which has been our main occupation and worry over the last four years. And although all these questions are of utmost importance (they will be evaluated in greater detail in the Closing Session) the Social Program meticulously prepared by the Steering Committee together with the Congress Agency is not less significant. Events like today's Cocktail offered by the City Council of Madrid in the Cecilio Rodriguez Gardens, the Closing Banquet scheduled for Thursday followed by the performance of El Ballet Español de María Røsa as well as technical visits and excursions planned will surely promote the traditional friendly atmosphere which was always typical of these reunions.

Madrid is a young and warm city and the visitors are usually impressed by the fact that they do not feel like strangers in it. For that reason we did not call our yesterday's encounter the "icebreaking party" since Madrid's traditional hospitality is in itself a "party" and as for the "ice", it melts fast with the summer heat. Nevertheless, while you discover the charms of our city or wander through Conference halls, I would like you to understand share my gratitude to all the persons and Institutions that have made this great event possible and who are listed in the last pages of the Final Program as well as those whose representatives we have today at this Table. I would particularly like to thank D. Felipe Martínez, General Director of the Centro de Estudios y Experimentación de Obras Públicas, D. Angel Arévalo, General Director of the Instituto Geográfico Nacional Institutions which have beared, together with the Instituto de Ciencias de la Construcción Eduardo Torroja of which I am the Director, the greatest part of the responsibility of organizing this Conference.

I wish you all a fruitful reunion and a happy stay among us these few days. Thank you very much.

*Editor's remark: This address was originally delivered in Spanish. Simultaneous translation into English was provided.*