This ISRM regional symposium was jointly organized by the South African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy (SAIMM) and the South African National Institute of Rock Engineering (SANIRE) (the ISRM NG South Africa). It was hosted in Cape Town during the period 30 March to 3 April 2008. Previous symposia on this specialist subject have been held in:

- 1983 in Luleå, Sweden
- 1992 in Sudbury, Canada
- 1997 in Lillehammer, Norway
- 1999 in Kalgoorlie, Australia
- 2004 in Perth, Australia

The venue for the Cape Town symposium was the Table Bay Hotel in the V&A Waterfront. Cape Town was chosen as a venue as it is an historical area with considerable natural beauty and there are many steep natural slopes and cuttings involving rock support in the area.

A total of 48 papers were presented during 3 days with 117 local and international delegates attending the symposium. Keynote speakers were Dr P. Pells from Australia.
presenting “What happened to ‘mechanics’ in rock mechanics and ‘geology’ in engineering geology”, Mr I. Northcroft presenting “Computerised control for robotically applied thin sprayed liners” and Mr J. Chapman presenting “Tunnelling under Johannesburg – An overview of the Gautrain Project”. A key aspect of the symposium was the good cross-pollination between mining and civil rock engineering practitioners as excellent papers from both fields were presented.

Social functions were organized to provide the necessary networking opportunities. These included a cocktail party in the exhibition area to give the sponsors the necessary exposure, as well as a cocktail function in the Two Oceans Aquarium.

Following the symposium, technical visits were arranged to Chapman’s Peak Drive in Cape Town, illustrating the slope stabilization measures that have been implemented along this road, as well as a visit to the 4 km long Huguenot Road Tunnel. Visits were also arranged to the Mponeng deep level gold mine near Johannesburg and the Gautrain project currently under construction in the Johannesburg-Pretoria area.
Slope stabilization measures along Chapman’s peak drive.

Technical visit to the Huguenot tunnel near the town of Paarl.