

Correspondence

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Further to the comment and appeal submitted by L. Jürgenson (June, 1979), with which I would generally agree, it may be of interest to note nonetheless that since the definition of unit weight of any material is generally established as the weight of that material per unit total volume, the term 'unit weight of dry soil' (ASTM, ASCE) should refer to a really dry or dried soil. However, in current soil mechanics practice the term is—wrongly—applied to the weight of dry soil per unit volume of natural soil: that is, the soil is 'dried' mentally, in computation, at constant volume. Since most soils (and many porous materials) do suffer a change of total volume in routine drying, an appropriate distinction might be made between 'unit weight of dry soil' for a really dry or dried soil, and the more appropriate term 'apparent' or 'nominal' dry unit weight, applicable to the most frequently used parameter of interest. Such a terminology has gained wide acceptance in Brazil.

Similarly, for more appropriate terminology consistent with logical practices of collateral sciences and technologies, one should consider renaming the grainsize Uniformity Coefficient to Non-Uniformity Coefficient, because it is illogical to have a coefficient inversely proportional to the property it purports to indicate. Finally, why not attempt to standardize the use of the term Coefficient when there are units, and Index when dimensionless parameters are at stake?