

**Professor Dr. Vilho Väisälä Award-2016
for the development and implementation of instruments and
methods of observation in developing countries**

Ms. B. Amudha, Scientist-D, Regional Meteorological Centre, India Meteorological Department (IMD), Chennai and Dr. Rabia Merrouchi, National Meteorological Service, Morocco were awarded the coveted Sixth Granting of the Professor Dr. Vilho Väisälä Award-2016 for the development and implementation of instruments and methods of observation in developing countries in Madrid, Spain on 28 September 2016 in the Technical Conference on Meteorological and Environmental Instruments and Methods of Observation (CIMO TECO 2016) organised by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) during 27-30 September 2016. Ms. B. Amudha received the award from Dr. Wenjian Zhang, Assistant Secretary General, WMO.

The award is in recognition of the technical report WMO– Instruments and Observing Methods (IOM) Report No. 117 entitled “*Survey on alternatives for dangerous and obsolete instruments: evaluation of the questionnaire and recommendations for alternatives*” (http://library.wmo.int/pmb_ged/iom_117_en.pdf). The document is her contribution when she served as a member of the WMO Expert Team on Regional Instrument Centres, Calibration and Traceability during the tenure 2010-14 having been officially nominated by IMD, New Delhi. The questionnaire was prepared by her and uploaded by WMO in their web site in August 2013. The responses received from the Member countries were analysed and the final version is available in the web site of WMO since January 2015.

The report enables a WMO Member country to determine where it stands in relation to other WMO Members in regard to its use of dangerous or obsolete instrumentation, and offers some ideas on how to replace these instruments by suggesting possible alternatives which are currently used in Morocco. The report gains significance in the background of two landmark events. The Fifteenth Session (2-8 Sept. 2010) of the CIMO highlighted the need for simple, stable and accurate instruments to replace mercury based and obsolete instruments widely used in National Meteorological and Hydrological Services. The global treaty Minamata Convention on Mercury, 2013 ratified by 128 member countries accentuates the phasing out of mercury based meteorological instruments by the year 2020 as mercury is hazardous to both mankind and the environment.

Prof. Dr. Vilho Väisälä Award for an Outstanding Research Paper on Instruments and Methods of Observation was established in 1985 and the first award presentation ceremony took place in 1986. Prof. Dr. Joseph P. Pichamuthu, of M. Visvesvaraya Institute of Technology, Bangalore is the first Indian to receive this award in 2005. A second Professor Dr. Vilho Väisälä Award for the Development and Implementation of Instruments and Methods of Observation in Developing Countries was established in 2004. Both awards granted bi-annually are administered by the WMO and they carry a medal, diploma and a cash prize of US\$ 10,000 to be shared by the co-authors of the publication.

Ms. B. Amudha is the first Indian and the first IMD official to receive the prestigious Prof. Vaisala award instituted for developing countries.

