PRESS RELEASE

WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION
A SPECIALIZED AGENCY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

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PROFESSOR VERNER E. SUOMI OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA WINS 1993 INTERNATIONAL METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION PRIZE

Geneva, 17 June — The distinguished American Professor Emeritus Verner E. Suomi, also known as the "father of satellite meteorology", was chosen today to receive the 38th International Meteorological Prize (IMO) by the forty-fifth session of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Executive Council.

Prof. Suomi is well-known in the scientific community for his contributions to remote sensing from both polar orbiting and geostationary satellites. His unique insights into the physics of the atmosphere and his engineering genius have made contributions of the highest order to the understanding of atmospheric processes.

The prize was established by WMO in 1955 to commemorate its predecessor organization, the IMO, which initiated international collaboration in meteorology in 1873. In 1951, IMO was transformed into the World Meteorological Organization — a specialized agency of the United Nations.

Professor Suomi graduated from the University of Chicago in 1953 and became the first director of the University of Wisconsin’s Space Science and Engineering in Madison, retiring in 1988. From 1948 until his retirement from teaching in 1986, Suomi held joint appointments in the College of Letters and Sciences (Meteorology), the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (Soil Science) and the Institute for Environmental Studies. He served as Director of the Cooperative Institute for Meteorological Satellite Studies from its establishment in 1980 to 1984.

Presently a Professor Emeritus, Prof. Suomi has been the major driving force in the scientific community for applications of space systems to weather services for the general public.

From 1966 to 1979, he was Chairman of the National Academy of Sciences’ (NAS) National Academy of Engineering Advisory Committee to the Environmental Sciences Service Administration, and served as Vice-Chairman of the NAS Committee on Atmospheric Sciences from 1968 to 1982. Prof. Suomi was also Chairman of the United States Committee for the Global Atmospheric Research Program and has served as Chairman of the Climate Research Board from 1979 to 1982.
This year's IMO prizewinner has received numerous honours and awards, among them: NASA's Exceptional Achievement Medal in 1980 for outstanding accomplishments and contributions to the Pioneer Venus Project, the Robert Losey Award in 1971 for outstanding contributions to meteorology as applied to aeronautics and for his creativity and ingenuity in designing sensors for satellite applications as exemplified by his "spin-scan camera" which has made it possible to view the earth's atmosphere as an entity. The camera revolutionized weather observation and in 1984, the Franklin Institute gave Prof. Suomi its highest award, the Franklin Medal, for this development. The camera system is now used on U.S. geostationary meteorological satellites.

Prof. Suomi is currently involved in the development of an atmospheric temperature sounder for the Synchronous Satellite programme, a long sought goal of the U. S. satellite programme.

In 1985, Prof. Suomi was one of 100 American scientists to receive a commemorative medal from the Soviet Geophysical Committee for his contributions to the fulfillment of international programmes in geophysics.

Prof. Suomi has been associated with WMO over many years through his involvement in several technical and scientific bodies of the Organization. He participated in the work of the Joint Scientific Committee of the Global Atmospheric Research Programme of WMO and the International Council for Scientific Unions. His work contributed significantly to the Atlantic Weather Experiment in 1974 and the Global Weather Experiment in 1979, when pioneering advances were made in the application of space technology to meteorology and weather prediction. Prof. Suomi has published numerous scientific papers and publications which have contributed to the transfer of technology in all fields of meteorology and hydrology, both in the United States and internationally.

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