

Founders of 'Lonely Planet' awarded UN agency's lifetime achievement award

31 January 2017 – Hailing the impact of the popular 'Lonely Planet' travel guidebook series on global tourism, the United Nations tourism agency today awarded its founders with its 13th Lifetime Achievement Award.

"The inspirational role that Lonely Planet inferred worldwide to travellers, writers and the tourism sector in general has been the major reason to concede the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Lifetime Achievement Award to [Tony Wheeler and Maureen Wheeler]," noted the UN agency in a news release.

According to the agency, the Wheelers founded Lonely Planet Publications in 1972, after a trip across Asia.

In the last 40 years, their guidebooks have sold over 100 million copies in English and other languages. The books also ventured into many other travel areas including a television series and an award-winning travel website.

In addition, through their Planet Wheeler Foundation, Tony and Maureen Wheeler, have been involved in more than 50 projects in the developing world, principally in south-east Asia and east Africa, with a focus on poverty alleviation.

They are also involved in a number of ventures, including promoting literature and the arts, as well as entrepreneurship and protection and development of archaeological sites in developing countries.

The UNWTO Lifetime Achievement Award is conferred every year to individuals with visionary leadership and significant contributions to the global tourism sector.