

UNWTO Announces Winners of the First UNWTO Award



The Chairman of the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA), Mr. Shao Qiwei, and the founder of the international hotel chain Meliá Hotels, Mr. Gabriel Escarrer Juliá, have been named as the first winners of the UNWTO Award for Lifetime Achievement.

The **UNWTO Award for Lifetime Achievement** was established in 2012 as an annual award recognizing those individuals who have demonstrated excellence throughout their tourism careers and who serve as inspirational role models.

“UNWTO is extremely proud to award Mr. Qiwei, Chairman of CNTA, and Mr. Escarrer, founder of Meliá Hotels International, the Award for Lifetime Achievement,” said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai.

“Mr. Qiwei has played a pivotal role in the development of Chinese domestic and international tourism since taking up his position as Chairman of CNTA and President of the China Tourism Association (CTA),” said Mr. Rifai. “Under his leadership, China has become one of the world’s tourism leaders, contributing also to the growing political recognition of the sector,” he added.

The panel of judges highlighted Mr. Qiwei’s involvement in identifying tourism as a ‘strategic pillar’ of China’s economy by the Chinese Government; a decision pinpointed by UNWTO as one of the factors behind the country’s extraordinary tourism success of recent years.

Congratulating Mr. Escarrer, Mr. Rifai said: “This award recognizes Mr. Escarrer’s leadership and vision in promoting a responsible tourism sector. Gabriel Escarrer established Meliá Hotels International in 1956 at the age of 21, a hotel chain which is today one of the largest in the world, sharing the benefits of tourism with his employees and society.”

In addition to his business expertise, the panel of judges praised Mr. Escarrer for his pioneering work in corporate social responsibility at a time when this was far from most businessperson’s minds, particularly his early commitment to employee working conditions.

The UNWTO Awards for Lifetime Achievement will be presented on 15 November during the UNWTO Awards Ceremony in Istanbul, Turkey. The winners of the UNWTO Ulysses Prize for Excellence in the Creation and Dissemination of Knowledge and the UNWTO Ulysses Awards for Excellence and Innovation in Tourism will also be awarded in Istanbul.

Note for Editors:

UNWTO Awards for Excellence and Innovation in Tourism

For individuals:

- UNWTO Ulysses Prize for Excellence in the Creation and Dissemination of Knowledge
- UNWTO Award for Lifetime Achievement

For tourism initiatives:

- UNWTO Ulysses Award for Innovation in Public Policy and Governance
- UNWTO Ulysses Award for Innovation in Enterprises
- UNWTO Ulysses Award for Innovation in Non-Governmental Organizations
- UNWTO Ulysses Award for Innovation in Research and Technology

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