

Mr. Tony Wheeler,  
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By fax: 61.3.8379.8111 (2 pages)

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14<sup>th</sup> November 2001

Dear Mr. Wheeler,

### **Burma: Lonely Planet's activities**

We acknowledge receipt with thanks of your fax dated 11 May and its reminder dated 13 July 2001, addressed to the three of us, and apologise for the delay in replying. Please be assured that both of your communications were read with much interest by all concerned.

After carefully analysing your fax, we have come to the conclusion that the phrasing of our joint letter was, perhaps, not entirely adapted to the specific situation of your company with regard to its links with Burma.

We hope to clear up this misunderstanding by informing you that yours was one of over 300 multinational companies that received our standard, joint letter, by which we informed them that we had found reliable information to the effect that they either operated in Burma, had business relations with the country or had been in direct contact with officials of the regime. In the case of Lonely Planet, as in that of dozens other companies, our information came from your own website.

For many reasons, which are summarised quite well on your company's website, Global Unions believe that tourism to Burma should be discouraged. As your own text indicates, the requirement of foreign currency exchange for tourists visiting Burma constitutes direct financial help for the junta. And we do not believe that individual tourists are in any position to promote democracy in the country. Rather, in many cases, their desire to do so may seriously hurt Burmese people whom they approach. We should also add that the ICFTU and several ITS took an active part in the "Boycott Myanmar Year" campaign, back in 1996-1997.

In conclusion, while we do not accuse Lonely Planet of having direct business links with the Burmese junta, we do consider that, in so far as your guidebook can have the effect of encouraging the public to visit that country, it offers a form of support, if indirect, to this brutal military dictatorship. We therefore see no compelling reason to withdraw Lonely

Planet's name from a list of approximately 260 multinational companies with links to Burma that we intend to release shortly. Many other tourism-related companies have been kept on our list for identical or similar reasons.

We should point out, however, that our website listing companies involved with Burma will give the public easy access to your letter responding to us as well as to your website. Anybody interested in your company's arguments and position on Burma will be able to read your views.

Yours sincerely,

	David Cockroft	
Bill Jordan	ITF General Secretary	John Evans
ICFTU General Secretary	Chair of the ITS General Conference	General Secretary TUAC