



Conflicts of Interest in the UNFCCC

Call for Parties (countries) and Non-Parties (observers) to oppose undue access and influence of big polluters within climate policymaking

The UK Youth Climate Coalition (UKYCC) expresses our profound concern that the current rules governing the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) permit polluting industries to exert undue influence on policymaking, and **believe that such industries hold an unequivocal Conflict of Interest (COI) with urgent and just climate action.**

COI refers to the notion that **progressive climate policy can never be made with corporate interests - such as those of the fossil fuel industry - present within policymaking dialogues,** due to the two holding irreconcilably conflicting motives.

Curtailing the influence of such companies is, therefore, imperative to protect the legitimacy of international climate diplomacy. **International youth cannot have confidence in the COP process to protect our futures without the adoption of robust COI frameworks.**

We urge for **the implementation of a robust 'Conflict of Interests' policy by both individual COP Parties (countries) and the UNFCCC** to prevent filibustering, delay, and distraction from further undermining climate action.

Our Recommendations for the Governments

- **Recommendation 1:** Urgently establish a definition for what constitutes a Conflict Of Interest internally and across the UNFCCC.
- **Recommendation 2:** Implement a transparent declaration of interests for all your party delegates.
- **Recommendation 3:** Support a robust accountability framework within the UNFCCC to protect against undue influence of corporate actors.
- **Recommendation 4:** Recommend other Parties apply the Accountability Framework across all activities ahead of COP28.
- **Recommendation 5:** Support calls for a fossil-free presidency, at this, and all future, COP's.
- **Recommendation 6:** Support an end to corporate COP sponsorships by polluting entities.



Polluter presence at COP

In 2022, despite the world's largest oil and gas companies more than doubling their combined profits to \$219 billion, average investment in renewable energies was found to remain at only a mere 5% of company spending.¹

With the spotlight growing ever-larger on the climate crisis and its unfolding impacts, fossil fuel company representation and marketing at the COP conferences continues to increase. COP27, for example, hosted **over 630 fossil fuel delegates** - a group larger than all but one country's delegation² - which provided undue influence to polluting interests over the outcome of negotiations; a fact previously boasted by fossil fuel corporations themselves³.

This was the same year that analysis by the Global Carbon Project found that global carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels increased by 1.0% in 2022, hitting a new record high of 36.6bn tonnes of CO₂ (GtCO₂). In spite of this, **not one of 39 major global oil and gas companies** has adopted a business strategy that would limit warming to safe levels.⁴

Following decades of climate denial, the fossil fuel industry has continued to **invest over \$160 billion into exploration for new fossil reserves since 2020**. This flies in the face of scientific evidence, such as that by the IEA, which makes clear that new fossil fuel projects will prevent global efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C.

Despite this, COP28 is to be presided over by the chief executive of the 11th biggest oil and gas producer in the world; ADNOC. Sultan al-Jaber oversaw the production and delivery of **more than a billion barrels of oil equivalent (BBOE)** at the company in 2021. Moreover, despite their leading role in this year's global climate talks, ADNOC is set to still further increase production volumes by 7.6 BBOE by 2030.

This is an **irreconcilable conflict of interest**, with routes of access, such as the Presidency and delegation access, enabling polluting companies and governments to be granted a hand on the wheel of the world's greatest existential threat, as well as an outsized influence, exposure, and soft power within the COP process.

The world cannot afford anymore denial, delay, or distraction. To maintain youth confidence, Government delegations must support effective COI policies that hold both themselves and the UNFCCC to account.

¹ Channel 4. 2022. "Energy companies investing just 5% of profits in renewables." August 2022.

² Global Witness. 2022. "636 fossil fuel lobbyists granted access to COP27." November 2022.

³ The Intercept, 2018. "Shell Executive Boasts That His Company Influenced The Paris Agreement". December 2018.

⁴ Climate Action 100+. 2022. "Net Zero Company Benchmark." Climate Action 100+. September 2022.