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Climate negotiations at UN's aviation agency at risk of 'capture' by industry

New analysis highlights industry influence and transparency concerns at UN International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

The aviation industry appears to have an outsized influence over global climate rules for the sector amid limited public scrutiny, according to a *detailed analysis* of corporate engagement and transparency rules at the UN's aviation agency by climate think tank InfluenceMap.

The research shows that more than 30% of delegates at the **International Civil Aviation Organization's** (ICAO) climate meetings since the Paris Agreement directly represented the aviation or fossil fuel industries. At these meetings, industry outnumbered environmental delegates by more than seven to one.

It further highlights how delegates are required to sign non-disclosure agreements to participate in the closed-door meetings of ICAO's climate negotiation body - the **Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection** (CAEP) - a level of secrecy not required by other UN climate bodies.

The media is prohibited from attending these meetings and key climate negotiation documents, such as working papers, are not made publicly available.

InfluenceMap Program Manager Ben Youriev said: *"In behind-closed-doors UN negotiations, the aviation industry appears to be shaping its own climate rules with limited public transparency or oversight.*

"The aviation industry has also used various PR campaigns to downplay its role in the climate crisis and promote its support for a net-zero 2050 target, while at the same time lobbying to weaken real-world policies designed to reach such a target.

"Given the urgency of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, this analysis raises questions about the UN aviation agency's ability to effectively regulate global climate rules for aviation."

InfluenceMap's findings coincide with the 41st ICAO Assembly currently taking place in Montreal, where negotiators are expected to set a long-term aspirational goal for the aviation sector.

On current forecasts, emissions from global aviation are forecast to rise by *190-277% between 2015-2050*. Given aviation was not explicitly referenced in the Paris Agreement, the responsibility for addressing international aviation emissions has since largely remained with ICAO.

ICAO's primary response to the climate crisis - strongly supported by industry - continues to be the carbon offsetting scheme, *CORSIA*. Yet, the *IPCC* says the scheme "does not lead to a reduction in in-sector emissions from aviation".

The research highlights how the **International Air Transport Association (IATA)**, an airline industry lobbying group, appears to have been involved in proposing and developing the CORSIA scheme, including subsequent changes.

- **IATA** led 2020 efforts to weaken CORSIA's effectiveness by changing the baseline year. The measure was supported by **ICAO** a few months later using language that appeared to reflect key positions put forward by **IATA**.
- Furthermore, **IATA** continues to argue in favor of CORSIA's primacy as a climate policy - despite the IPCC's criticism - to push back against regional efforts to cut aviation emissions. For example, when lobbying against numerous aviation-related policies in the EU's European Green Deal, **IATA** argued that CORSIA should take precedence.
- An August 2022 IATA working paper further appeared to urge the ICAO Assembly to extend the less stringent CORSIA baseline until 2035, weakening the scheme's longer-term offsetting requirements. It also called on ICAO to take a stronger position against the need for national and regional climate policies for aviation. IATA appears to have withdrawn the paper mid-way through the ICAO Assembly.

COMPARING TRANSPARENCY AND INDUSTRY INFLUENCE OVER UN CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS

UN CLIMATE GOVERNANCE BODY	UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC)	INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION (IMO)	INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO)
SECTORS COVERED BY UN BODY	ALL SECTORS	SHIPPING	AVIATION
ARE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS EXCLUDED FROM CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS?	NO	NO	NO
ARE CORPORATIONS EXCLUDED FROM STATE DELEGATIONS DURING CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS?	NO	NO	NO
ARE DELEGATES PERMITTED TO SHARE CLIMATE NEGOTIATION DETAILS WITH EXTERNAL GROUPS SUCH AS THE MEDIA?	YES	PARTLY	NO
CAN ALL DELEGATES PARTICIPATE IN CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT SIGNING NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENTS?	YES	YES	NO
ARE ALL KEY CLIMATE NEGOTIATION DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS MADE PUBLIC?	YES	PARTLY	NO
ARE ALL CLIMATE POLICY PAPERS FROM STATES & INDUSTRY MADE PUBLIC?	YES	YES	NO
ARE THE MEDIA ABLE TO ATTEND AND FREELY REPORT ON CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS?	YES	PARTLY	NO
ARE NGOS ALLOWED TO ATTEND KEY CLIMATE NEGOTIATION MEETINGS?	PARTLY	PARTLY	PARTLY
ARE JOB AFFILIATIONS OF CLIMATE NEGOTIATORS DISCLOSED IN DELEGATE LISTS?	YES	YES	NO
% OF DELEGATES REPRESENTING INDUSTRY AT RECENT CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS	1%	25%	31%

Graph comparing transparency rules and practices and industry influence at ICAO with other key UN climate negotiation bodies: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and International Maritime Organization (IMO).

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A global net-zero CO2 target for aviation

The report raises questions about support from the aviation industry, championed by IATA, for a net-zero 2050 CO₂ aspirational target at the September 2022 ICAO Assembly.

This is despite multiple IATA key members raising concerns about its feasibility, and broad opposition from IATA to near-term policies that might help achieve this target, such as numerous aviation-related proposals in the European Green Deal.

InfluenceMap analysis suggests that the global aviation industry has used its support for net-zero in PR campaigns to promote flying as 'sustainable' and at the same time distract attention away from policies that would otherwise reduce in-sector aviation emissions, particularly at national and regional levels.

[Click here for full report](#)

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About InfluenceMap

InfluenceMap is a London-based think tank with offices in Tokyo, Seoul, and New York. It provides data driven analysis on issues related to energy and climate change. Our metrics for measuring corporate influence over climate policy are used by investors, including the global Climate Action 100+ investor engagement process.