

Corporate Lobbyists at Climate Talks

June 2023 - Earlier this month delegates to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) met in Bonn, Germany to prepare for *COP 28* (the 28th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC) which will meet in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) later this year. Surprisingly, this meeting received minimal media coverage even as the impact of climate change is impossible to ignore.

It is almost eight years since the historic *COP 21* meeting in Paris, where 196 nations pledged to limit global warming to 1.5° C above preindustrial levels. Nevertheless, subsequent COP meetings have not succeeded in bringing about the magnitude of change the current situation demands. For example, *COP 26*, which met in Scotland in 2021, fell short of hopes and expectations.

The upcoming **COP 28 is raising questions about the participation of representatives from the fossil fuel industry in these international climate meetings.** It turns out that the president of *COP 28* is also the chief executive of the UAE's national oil company. The UAE is an oil and gas producing country that is planning to expand its production facilities, even as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warns that increasing the supply of fossil fuels is incompatible with the 1.5° C goal.

“It’s time to understand that, as long as big polluters are engaged at the level that they are in COP, that we will never be able to have a real reduction of emissions,” *Thomas Joseph, Indigenous Environmental Network*

A report from Corporate Europe Observatory and Corporate Accountability released on June 8, 2023, stated that the five major fossil fuel companies have brought more than 400 lobbyists to UN climate talks since *COP 21* in 2015. These same companies have also engaged in extensive lobbying efforts to influence European Union and U.S. government policy. Since 2016, there have been 376 declared fossil fuel lobbyists in Brussels and over 1,000 in Washington, D.C.

Fortunately, the UN is taking action to increase transparency and hold corporate lobbyists accountable. **They will require that persons registering for COP 28 declare their affiliation.** Currently, lobbyists do not have to wear ID badges, so it is not always evident who is a lobbyist. Some lobbyists have registered as part of a national delegation or an observer group, further obscuring their intentions.