



Aviation industry plan to offset emissions will push global warming beyond 1.5° Celsius



*Aviation has no existing United Nations' targets to reduce emissions. The UN International Civil Aviation Organisation foresees that emissions will **increase** by between **300-700** per cent by 2050*

Aviation is one of only two sectors worldwide with no existing United Nations' (UN) targets to reduce emissions. In fact, the UN International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) foresees that emissions will increase by between 300-700 per cent by 2050.¹ In September 2016, ICAO plans to adopt measures to achieve "carbon-neutral growth"² from 2020. The proposal will introduce carbon offsetting and be voluntary until 2027. As the ICAO Assembly gathers to consider the proposal, the undersigned organisations stand together to denounce the plans in their current form as they undermine our ability to limit warming to the agreed UN aim of well below 2° Celsius, aiming for 1.5° Celsius. We call on ICAO to reduce emissions now and to exclude forest and soil carbon offsets as a first step.

11.11.11, Belgium • Abibimman Foundation, Ghana • Accion Ecologica • African Youth International Development organisation • Aitec, France • AMAF-BENIN • Aliança RECOs – Redes de Cooperação Comunitária Sem Fronteiras, Brazil • Amis de la Terre, France • Amigos da Terra, Brazil • Alternatives Durables pour le Développement, Cameroon • Attac Austria • Attac France • ARA, Germany • APED, Cameroon • Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, Asia-Pacific • Asian Peoples' Movement on Debt and Development, Philippines • Avenir Climatique, France • Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha & India Climate Justice • Biofuelwatch UK/US • Both ENDS, Netherlands • Brot für die Welt, Germany • Bruno Manser Fonds, Switzerland • CADTM International • CarbonMarket Watch, Belgium • Carfree.com • Censat Agua Viva-Amigos de la Tierra Colombia • Ciel voilé, France • Climate Action Network, France • Climate Express, Belgium • CNCD 11.11.11 • Colectivo Ts'unel Bej, Mexico • Confédération Paysanne, France • Coordinadora de pueblos y organizaciones del oriente del estado de México • Counter Balance, Czech Republic • COECOCEIBA, Costa Rica • Corporate Europe Observatory, Belgium • CRAD, Central African Republic • denkhausbremen, Germany • Digo Bikas Institute, Nepal • DKA Austria • Ecologistas en Acción, Spain • Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria • European Institute for Sustainable Transport, Germany • FAJOID, Cameroon • Fairwatch, Italy • Fern, Belgium • Finance & Trade Watch, Austria • Focus on the Global South Thailand, Philippines, India • Food & Water Europe, Belgium • Food & Water Watch, USA • Fórum Mudanças Climáticas e Justiça Social-Brasil • Forum Ökologie & Papier, Germany • Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland • Friends of the Earth Malaysia • Friends of the Earth Norway • Friends of the Earth Scotland • Friends of the Earth-US • Friends of the Earth International • Fundación Solon, Bolivia • GAIA - Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, UK • Global Forest Coalition • Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, U • Green Development Advocates, Congo Basin • Green Budget Germany • Greenpeace • Grupo Carta de Belém • Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF), Nigeria • Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, Germany • Indigenous Environmental Network • Institute for Policy Studies - Climate Policy Program • Leave it in the Ground Initiative • Movimento Mulheres pela P@Z!, Brazil • New York Climate Action Group, US • Plane Stupid, UK • Pro REGENWALD, Germany • Rainforest Foundation UK • Re:Common, Italy • Rettet den Regenwald e.V., Germany • REDD:Monitor • Robin Wood, Germany • Salva la Selva, Spain • Society of akumals vital ecology • SONIA for a Just New World, Italy • System Change not Climate Change, Austria • TaCa, France • Terra, Italy • Third World Network • TierrActiva Peru • Timberwatch Coalition, South Africa • Transport and Environment • Werkgroep Toekomst Luchtvaart, Netherlands • Woodland League, Ireland • World Rainforest Movement



Carbon offsets do not reduce emissions

Greenhouse gas emissions from aviation almost doubled from 1990 to 2006. This is a terrifying statistic given that it is caused by between 3-7 per cent of the world population.³ Aviation emissions need to start reducing and they need to start now. ICAO's proposal seriously lacks ambition.⁴

One of the main concerns is that ICAO's proposal to reduce the climate impact of aviation relies heavily on carbon offsetting. Offsetting is widely considered a false solution to climate change because it does not reduce emissions, but merely shift emissions from one sector to another. At best, it is a zero-sum option.⁵

So far, ICAO have elaborated a number of principles that carbon offsets would need to comply with, such as avoiding double counting,⁶ being calculated against a realistic baseline, being permanent and doing no harm. However, the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) has deeply discredited the notion that offsets provide climate benefits. Offset projects have proved themselves, by and large, incapable of respecting the principles laid out by ICAO.

Fraudulent sales of carbon credits as investments have swindled many vulnerable pensioners out of their life savings.⁷ As a result of the experience with the CDM as well as controversies and scandals around carbon offset projects in the voluntary carbon markets, the world's largest offset market, the EU Emissions Trading System, has officially banned the use of offset credits to meet the EU emission targets post 2020.

Forests and soils do not offset fossil fuel emissions

Land-based carbon offsets, such as from Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) type projects or from agriculture are particularly contentious, with greater risks for the climate.

By nature, REDD+ projects place restrictions on existing land use – that is how they generate the carbon savings sold as offset credits. Because the large majority of REDD+ projects (wrongly) blames deforestation on small-scale peasant farming, in particular where it involves shifting cultivation, such restrictions have a detrimental impact on peasant livelihoods and forest peoples' way of life. By contrast, REDD+ projects that tackle the real drivers of large-scale deforestation – extraction of oil, coal, mining, infrastructure, large-scale dams, industrial logging and international trade in agricultural commodities – are by and large absent.⁸

With the challenges of counting emissions reductions and distributing offset payments to multiple small-scale farmers, there is a risk that agricultural offsets would favour large-scale farmers or monoculture farming practices, creating another driver of land dispossession of smallholder farmers, particularly in the global South.

Offset credits from forest conservation, tree plantation or soil carbon sequestration carry the additional risk of becoming null and void when wildfires, storms or natural decay cause uncontrollable release of carbon stored in the trees, soils or other natural habitats. This is one of the reasons why the CDM excludes all offset categories related to forest or agriculture land use except for afforestation, reforestation and biomass energy projects. Even then, credits from these tree planting offset projects are sold as temporary carbon credit because tree planting projects are not considered to permanently store carbon.

In short, land-based offset credits are controversial, and experience from REDD+ has shown that certification standards or safeguards cannot prevent conflicts.⁹

We, the undersigned, call on the members of ICAO to ensure measures adopted at the 39th ICAO Assembly will make an adequate and fair contribution to the global effort to limit global warming to well-below 2° Celsius, and aspire for 1.5° Celsius. Any measure adopted at the 39th ICAO meeting must be a serious proposal to reduce emissions. It must also exclude land based offset credits, such as REDD+ type projects.

1 <http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/transport/aviation/>

2 To achieve carbon neutral growth, ICAO proposes to improve the fuel efficiency of the aviation fleet worldwide by an average 1.5 percent per annum (a goal already being exceeded); to stabilize net aviation CO2 emissions at 2020 levels through so-called "carbon-neutral growth"; and to halve net CO2 emissions from the industry by 2050, compared with 2005. For detail, see <http://www.icao.int/environmental-protection/Pages/market-based-measures.aspx>

3 http://www.bund.net/fileadmin/bundnet/pdfs/mobilitaet/150804_bund_mobilitaet_ngo_luftverkehrskonzept.pdf

4 Airplane CO2 standard too weak, MEPs tell industry. 25.02.2016 <http://www.transporenvironment.org/news/airplane-co2-standard-too-weak-meps-tell-industry>; European NGO Comments on the ICAO Global MBM Process. 2013. <http://carbonmarketwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/EU-NGOs-on-ICAO-MBM-Process.pdf>

5 See for example, World Rainforest Movement (2015): REDD: A Collection of Conflicts, Contradictions and Lies. http://wrm.org.uy/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/REDD-A-Collection-of-Conflict_Contradictions_Lies_expanded.pdf

6 For more information on how ICAO is at risk of double-counting emissions, see www.fern.org/icaodoublecounting

7 REDD-Monitor (2016). Another 19 credit boiler room scams bite the dust. 16 Februar 2016. <http://www.redd-monitor.org/2016/02/11/another-19-carbon-credit-boiler-room-scams-bite-the-dust-including-not-before-time-carbon-neutral-investments/>

8 See for example, GRAIN (2015): How REDD+ projects undermine peasant farming and real solutions to climate change. <http://wrm.org.uy/browse-by-subject/mercantilization-of-nature/redd/>

9 See, for example, the large number of blog posts on the REDD-Monitor website, www.redd-monitor.org