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## **Aviation sector threatens to undermine Paris Agreement**

***See [1 minute clip](#) that Fern has produced on impact that aviation plan could have on the climate***

***Brussels – September 27, 2016*** - The aviation sector’s plan for tackling its greenhouse gas emissions would have disastrous consequences for the climate, according to a coalition of nearly 100 organisations, including Fern, Greenpeace, the Indigenous Environmental Network and Friends of the Earth.<sup>1</sup>

Today [September 27] the General Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO), a UN body, gathers in Montreal for ten days of discussion to decide on its response to the global climate crisis.

The measures ICAO is putting forward would enable the sector to increase its emissions by [up to 700 per cent](#) by 2050, and ‘offset’ them through a Global Market Based Mechanism (GMBM).

“At a time when the threat of climate change is greater than ever, the aviation industry is trying to dodge responsibility for its part in it with a proposal that would actually make things worse,” said Hannah Mowat, Fern’s forests and climate campaigner.

“Offsetting doesn’t work. So the idea that the aviation can enjoy almost unlimited growth in this way is a dangerous fallacy, and one which would derail the deal reached in Paris to limit global temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius.”

With [less than five years left](#) until our cumulative emissions put the 1.5-degree temperature target out of reach, we do not have the luxury to choose between reducing emissions and offsetting. [Both emission reductions and protecting forests are needed](#) if we have any chance of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees.

“EU Ministers attending ICAO must ensure that a more ambitious deal is reached: one that reduces emissions instead of increasing them,” said Mowat. “The EU should fight for this, and as a first step, ensure that land and forest carbon offsets are excluded.”

**ENDS**

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<sup>1</sup> A declaration signed by nearly 100 organisations is available at [www.fern.org/icaodeclaration](http://www.fern.org/icaodeclaration)



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Aviation is one of the [fastest growing](#) sources of greenhouse gas emissions, but was exempt from the agreement struck at the UN Climate Change talks in Paris last December. Emissions from aviation almost doubled between 1990 and 2006. If the global aviation sector were a country, it would be the world's seventh largest emitter.
- The GMBM would need offsets equivalent to at least [3,300 million tonnes of carbon dioxide just between 2021 and 2035](#) to compensate for the airline industry's growing climate impact. To put this into perspective, aggregate offset demand in the EU Emissions Trading System has been [estimated at around 1,650 million tonnes](#) of carbon dioxide between 2008 and 2020.
- Trees have [long been](#) seen as a source of cheap and attractive offsets, yet their inherent flaws – even by the ICAO's own standards – are well documented.
- First, the ICAO specifies that offsets must be 'additional', i.e. that airlines pay for emissions reductions that wouldn't have happened anyway, which is almost impossible to prove.
- Second, the ICAO also say offsets bought by airlines must not be 'double-counted', i.e. that they cannot also be used by forested countries to demonstrate emissions reductions. This would exclude most forests as these are typically already included in national greenhouse gas balance sheets, [but it will be very difficult to avoid double-counting from happening](#).
- Third, offsets must be permanent removals of CO<sub>2</sub>, otherwise there is no climate benefit. [This is not the case with forests which release CO<sub>2</sub>](#) if they burn or decay.
- ICAO standards also require that offsets 'do no harm'. But examples of where forest offsets have excluded people from their land are rife. Given the [social conflict](#) that's arisen from people being [denied access to their land](#) and their traditional use of forests being restricted, airlines must consider the likely damage to communities – and hence their own reputation.