

Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP
President of COP26
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AS

Sent by email

Berlin, 11 October 2021

Dear Mr. Sharma

The UN Secretary General António Guterres has called the November COP26 “a moment of truth for climate action.” The UK’s presidency of COP26, and your leadership, provides an important opportunity to both tackle the climate crisis and create a lasting legacy in the way COP processes are run.

A 2017 study by Influence Map¹ found that 35 of 50 of the most influential companies in Europe and North America were actively lobbying to delay or dilute climate policy, including standards and procedures. They include companies in the fossil fuel value chain, energy intensive companies, electric utilities and automotive manufacturers. The five biggest oil companies (BP, Shell, ExxonMobil, Chevron, and Total), had spent a combined US\$200 million annually (approx.) on lobbying to ‘control, delay or block’ climate policy in the four years after the Paris Agreement.

Conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived, undermine climate action. Causing a loss of both confidence and momentum in the process towards achieving the Paris Agreement’s goals. The slow progress made at UNFCCC and other fora in addressing conflicts of interest has left the COP 26 vulnerable to accusations of conflicts of interest which can undermine its legitimacy and integrity. We have already seen the impact of this. We share concerns about the conflicts of interest arising from the participation of Boston Consulting Group in the UK COP Presidency’s strategy implementation, strengthening of project management functions, and supporting the high-level champion’s work stream for COP 26.²

The UK’s presidency of COP 26 is an opportunity to demonstrate Global Britain’s leadership in ensuring the transparency and integrity of the COP process. We, therefore, request the UK COP Presidency, during the course of 2022, and on an ongoing basis to support the following initiatives:

1. Revise the code of conduct and rules for COP Presidencies - ‘How to COP’ - to include a section on UNFCCC COP Presidencies, and real or perceived conflicts of interest;
2. Initiate at COP 26 a new process for public submissions from Parties and Stakeholders on: (i) compulsory declaration of interests; (ii) lobbying public register; and (iii) a system for the management of conflicts of interest, and to hold a second in-session workshop at COP 27

¹ See: Corporate Carbon Policy Footprint - the 50 Most Influential. An Influence Map Report: <https://influencemap.org/report/Corporate-Carbon-Policy-Footprint-4274a464677481802bd502ffff008d74>

² <https://www.channel4.com/news/consultancy-firm-who-advise-fossil-fuel-industry-hired-to-consult-on-uns-cop26>

3. Be publicly vocal on the importance of avoidance of undue influence and conflicts of interest within the climate negotiations.

We would be happy to meet with you to discuss these concerns and work with you to ensure a successful COP process.

Yours sincerely,



Daniel Bruce
Chief Executive,
Transparency International UK



Delia Ferreira Rubio,
Chair
Transparency International