

To: Fossil Fuel Industry Lobby at United Nations World Climate Summit
Subject: Briefing on Lobbying Goals

Goals

You have been hired to represent the fossil fuel industries at the upcoming climate change negotiations. At the 2015 UN climate negotiations in Paris, nations agreed to a goal of limiting global warming to “well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.”

- Your goal is to prevent agreements to limit fossil fuel use, or at least to weaken and delay any such action in order to protect the interests of fossil fuel companies, their shareholders, and their employees.

Context

The fossil fuel industry can no longer argue that climate change is not happening or that fossil fuel combustion plays no role in it. These arguments are no longer credible in view of the immense body of scientific knowledge generated by scientists around the world. However, the world economy today depends on fossil fuels and limiting their use could be costly to consumers and threaten the existence of your industry.

Opportunities

Climate change poses both opportunities and risks to the industry. Climate change itself is making vast oil and gas reserves in the Arctic accessible as the Arctic ice melts. Nearly one-quarter of the Earth’s remaining oil and gas reserves are in this region.

Risks

If the UN succeeds in implementing policy to meet its climate goals, most of the world’s remaining fossil fuel reserves must be left in the ground. The companies you represent have already invested over US\$26 trillion in finding and exploiting these resources. If left unused, these vast investments would become stranded assets, never generating return to shareholders or national governments. Carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology offers a way to store emissions underground, but this technology is still being developed and may not be able to scale quickly enough to make the needed impact.

Industry Action

Above all, our actions must ensure our companies remain profitable. We are a powerful supporter of energy research and think tanks who are sympathetic to our cause. Similarly, they can be leveraged to support political leaders who understand the jobs and economic activity our industry generates.

Public Action

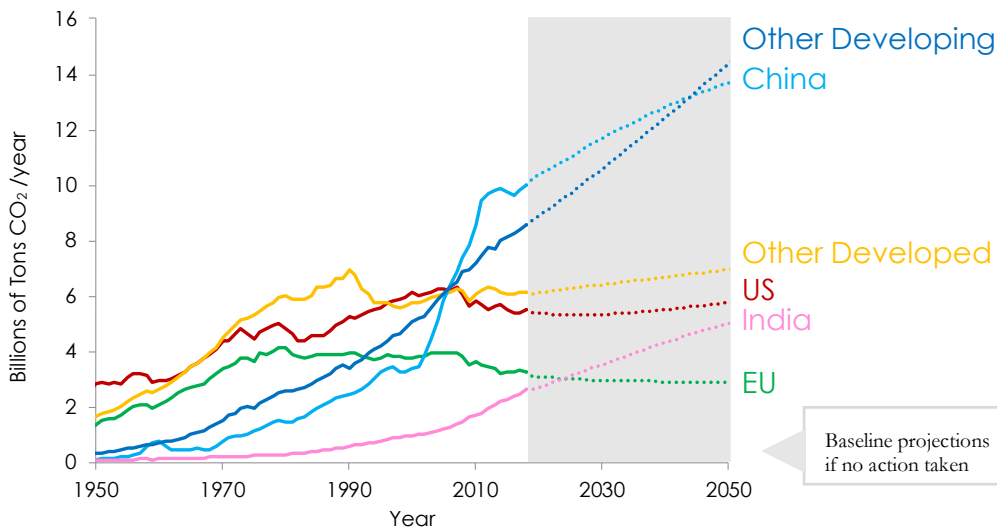
A majority of the public believes climate change is real and that human activity contributes significantly to it. Many people also support policies that could be implemented to address climate change, as long as they don’t raise the cost of energy. However, climate change ranks near the bottom of most people’s priorities, behind the economy, jobs, education, and national security. In many places we have carried out a concerted public relations campaign suggesting that there is uncertainty, that scientists disagree, and that the risks are exaggerated.¹ We have succeeded in limiting public understanding of the threats and have stalled effective action, especially by key developed countries such as the US.

¹ See E. Conway and N. Oreskes (2010) *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming*. Bloomsbury Press.

Strategy

Seek private meetings with delegates and remind them of the gains they stand to make by exploiting their own nation's rich fossil fuel reserves. Try to sow discord between developing and developed nations. China and the US are now the world's number one and number two emitters of CO₂ and greenhouse gases. In your meetings with developed nations representatives, emphasize that taxing fossil energy could hurt their competitiveness. In your meetings with China, India and the developing nations, argue that limiting their emissions could make them less competitive and keep their populations in poverty. Argue that fossil fuels are essential to development and prosperity. You should also argue that policies to prevent deforestation or to foster afforestation can be used instead of limiting fossil fuel use. Finally, lobby to ensure that the industry is compensated for its investment in stranded assets if any actions are taken to limit access to fossil fuel reserves.

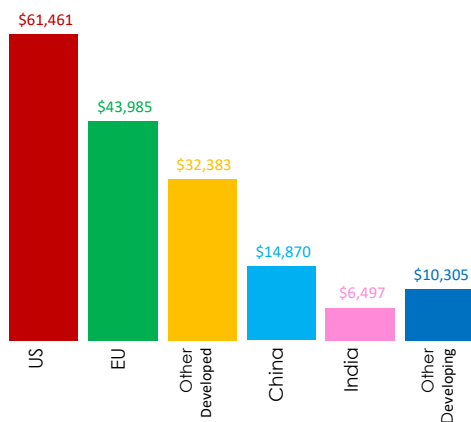
CO₂ Emissions from Energy Use



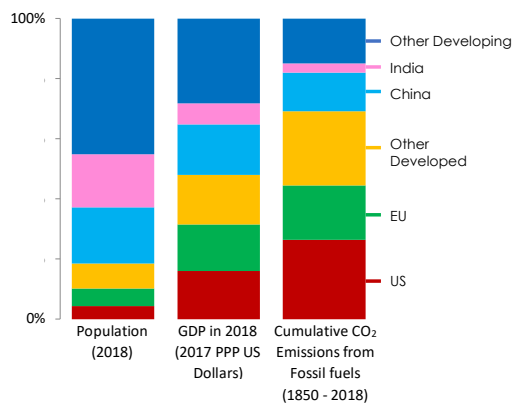
China is the world's largest emitter of CO₂. Without action, developing countries' emissions from fossil fuels are projected to double by 2100.

Sweden sustained annual CO₂ emissions reductions of 4.5% to reduce their dependence on oil (1976-1986). France and Belgium saw similar reductions around this time. Otherwise, most significant historical emission reductions have come from financial or political crises. More recently, the UK reduced emissions by an average 3.5% annually between 2007-2017.

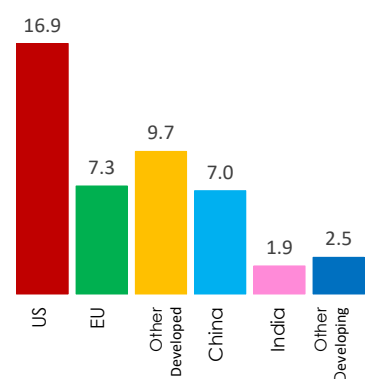
GDP per person in 2018 (2017 PPP US Dollars)



Population Wealth and Cumulative Emissions



Emissions from energy per person 2018 (tons CO₂ per year)



While cumulative emissions so far have been higher in the developed countries (i.e., the **US**, **EU**, and **other developed countries**), the growth of population, GDP per person, and emissions in the developing nations far outpaces growth in the developed countries. If no action is taken, cumulative emissions of all developed countries (**US**, **EU**, and **other developed**) are expected to fall to 42% of total by 2100.

Since 1980, emissions from energy per person have risen dramatically in **China** and **India** (by 380% and 360%, respectively) but have fallen in the **US** and **Europe** (by 20% and 28% respectively).