Behind the veil of civility: the ICC & IOE exposed

Over the past 50 years, corporations, trade associations and other entities representing corporate interests have invested increasing resources into influencing public policies to protect their bottom line, and have gained increasing legitimacy in policymaking spaces. But beneath a veneer of technical expertise, these trade associations represent the interests of their corporate members, even when they are at odds with the public interest: public health, human rights, and good governance itself. And because of the massive power amassed by transnational corporations, they are often able to capture policymaking processes and bodies, swaying the outcomes in their favor no matter the costs to a country, its people, or the environment.

Within the United Nations, industry associations like the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) have taken an increasingly vocal role in negotiations around human rights, climate change, and more.¹,² For example, at the fourth negotiation session on the draft treaty on transnational corporations and other business enterprises and human rights, the ICC and...
IOE released an analysis of the draft zero, stating their general lack of support for the text and the draft optional protocol—a protocol which has subsequently been removed from the most recent draft. The IOE also authored an “additional analysis” condemning the provisions on liability and showcasing the “exports at risk” for “Treaty Proponent” countries. This raises serious questions about the ICC and IOE’s conflicts of interest when it comes to policymaking to protect human rights, public health, and the environment.

Business organizations like the ICC represent some of the most abusive corporations in the world—including Dow, Chevron, and Shell—which have been implicated in serious human rights violations. This raises serious questions about the ICC and IOE’s conflicts of interest when it comes to policymaking to protect human rights, public health, and the environment.

**THE ICC: A CASE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) represents 6.5 million members in 130 countries, but the membership of the ICC’s individual chapters is highly secretive. It is governed by the World Council, a group of its member business executives, and is made up by sub-chapters, or national committees, from around the world. As is shown above, the ICC is tied to some of the world’s most abusive corporations through both revolving door relationships with industry CEOs and the member corporations of its chapters, which pay dues to the ICC.

**JOIN THE GLOBAL CAMPAIGN**

For more information on how to protect against conflicts of interest, please contact Shayda Naficy, Senior Program Director with Corporate Accountability at snaficy@corporateaccountability.org

**ENDNOTES**


7 Casselman, Ben; Ordóñez, Isabel; and Gonzalez, Angel. “Chevron hit with record judgement,” WSJ, February 15, 2011.


