

Headline: Al Gore slams COP28 climate summit host UAE, says its emissions soared

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Former U.S. Vice President Al Gore speaks during an interview with Reuters at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28), in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, December 3, 2023. REUTERS

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DUBAI — Climate advocate and former U.S. Vice President Al Gore on Sunday slammed the UAE — host of the COP28 climate summit — saying its position as overseer of international negotiations on global warming this year was an abuse of public trust.

The comments, made to Reuters in an interview on the sidelines of the conference in Dubai, reflected skepticism among some delegates that COP28 President Sultan al-Jaber, head of the UAE's national oil company ADNOC, can be an honest broker of a climate deal.

"They are abusing the public's trust by naming the CEO of one of the largest and least responsible oil companies in the world as head of the COP," Gore said.

At a presentation at the COP's main plenary hall before the interview, Gore unveiled data showing that the UAE's greenhouse gas emissions rose by 7.5% in 2022 from the previous year, compared to a 1.5% percent rise in the entire world. That data came from a coalition he co-founded called Climate TRACE, which uses artificial intelligence and satellite data to track carbon emissions of specific companies, Gore said.

The UAE did not immediately provide comment on Gore's remarks or the TRACE data.

Gore, who ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. presidency in 2000 as the Democratic Party's nominee, also railed against the presence of oil and gas companies at the annual climate summit and their promotion of technologies like carbon capture as a way to cleanse the emissions of fossil fuels.

Asked about the first-ever appearance of Exxon Mobil CEO Darren Woods at a COP conference, Gore said the oil giant's engagement does not brush away its history of resistance to climate policies.

"He should not be taken seriously. He's protecting his profits and placing them in a higher priority than the survival of the human civilization," Gore said.

Exxon Mobil declined to comment.

Gore urged delegates to agree to language in the final text issued at the summit to phase out fossil fuels, without caveats or mentions of carbon capture technology.

"The current state of the technology for carbon capture and direct air capture is a research project," Gore said. "There's been no cost reduction for 50 years and there is a pretense on the part of the

fossil fuel companies that it is a readily available, economically viable technology.”

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