



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on June 15, 2009

Global Tax on Air Travel Proposed

“People are beginning to understand that innovative ideas could generate a lot of money,” said the Danish environment and energy minister Connie Hedegaard, who will host the UN Climate Summit in Copenhagen later this year. Regarding the international tax proposal, she added: “Denmark would endorse it.” If by “generate” she means a global transfer-the-wealth scheme, then “innovative” ideas like global taxes would indeed do the trick.



The proposal to tax air travel would generate an estimated \$10 billion per year by increasing the cost of airline tickets by around one percent — to start with. Critics suggest that this is but the proverbial foot in the door for global taxation, and that once the precedent is set, global taxation would then become the norm. This particular scheme was introduced by 50 of the world’s “less-developed countries” and is strongly backed by the UN.

“I look back on this as a significant session that has advanced our work in important ways,” said the chief of the UN Climate Change Secretariat Yvo de Boer at a press conference. He also praised the draft treaty, which could be signed later this year as a successor to the Kyoto protocol. The United States has already pledged \$400 million to help poorer countries on climate change, but the amount was dismissed as insufficient by the coordinator of the G77.

Airlines, on the other hand, did not receive the proposal with open arms. “We are absolutely against” the compulsory air-travel tax, said Giovanni Bisignani, the chief executive of the International Air Transport Association. “We have seen so many taxes that we are fed up.” British Airways CEO Willie Walsh, however, agrees with the global tax. “For the industry to play its part the people who benefit from that industry — the passengers — are going to have to pay,” he said, immediately prompting calls for a boycott on the airline by opponents of the tax.

Another proposal for global taxation that was praised by delegates in Bonn was introduced by Mexico. The Mexican proposal is to create a “green fund” that would be funded by all countries based on the size of their economies, populations, and emissions. The U.S. special envoy for climate change, Todd Stern, called the proposal “highly constructive.” Developing countries also liked the proposal, claiming they need hundreds of billions of dollars per year from rich countries to help them deal with global warming.

Arguing against a global tax on airline travel, the Heritage Foundation said on its website that the tax would ultimately lead to less air travel and would simply shift costs to consumers. “And faced with a



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shortfall in tax revenue, the global warming gurus at the UN will no doubt find themselves devising yet more economically distortionary interventions to finance their agenda.” The posting also challenged the UN’s assumption that global warming is being caused by human activity.

Once the UN is able to raise its own revenue without depending on donations from member states, it will have made a major stride in becoming a world government.



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