

spotlight

2022 Issue 1



Big Polluters are using “net zero” plans to greenwash themselves as “climate champions.” But with your support, we are making sure that these pledges are understood to be the deceptive tactics that they are. Photo credit: CAPPA

Exposing Big Polluters’ tricks to the world

We push the industry’s deception to the forefront

“Our people-powered movement must prevail so our governments have no choice but to do right by us. We will not look away!”

ADERONKE IGE | ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF
CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY AND PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION AFRICA (CAPPA)

Learn more!

Continue reading about the impact you made at COP26 on Page 3.

Support this work:

[CorporateAccountability.org/
Spotlight](https://CorporateAccountability.org/Spotlight)

Big Polluters rely on positive press and their own greenwashing “net zero” announcements to spin a narrative of success despite their obstruction.

But this year, we saw major shifts in the way people around the world and in the U.S. are responding to the climate crisis—and corporate attempts to bury the truth.

Seizing this momentum, we and our allies collectively advanced exciting developments with our organizing to kick Big Polluters out and make them pay, making it harder for transnational corporations like Shell to portray themselves as the solution to the climate crisis.

All of this organizing came to a head at last fall’s U.N. climate treaty talks—the most inaccessible and inequitable of these negotiations to date. Big Polluters and the Global North governments that continue to prop these corporations up came to the talks hoping that the media would paint them as climate heroes. Instead, we coordinated with our allies to expose their dirty tricks to the world.

Not only did we expose the con behind their “net zero” schemes, we and our allies also revealed that the fossil fuel industry had the largest delegation at the talks. This analysis was first published as a BBC exclusive, and was then picked up by media outlets around the world, reaching more than 2 billion people worldwide!

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Imagining the world we want to build together

Dear friend,

Across our campaigns, we expose the truth that corporations would rather keep hidden, and we help build a vision of the kind of world that is possible. A world where people—not corporations—have the decision-making power around essential issues like water access, food sovereignty, and so much more.

At a time when something as basic as the truth has become deeply contested, the strategy of truth-telling is crucial. Through lies and distractions, corporations are able to get away with a multitude of abuses—from fueling the climate crisis to exploiting people's labor to harming people's health. In order to hold corporations accountable, we have to expose the truth behind their lies. This is why, for example, our media work to expose the influence of Big Polluters in climate policy is critical.

But as we expose the hollowness of these lies, we also lift up narratives about how the world could be. We know it's possible to create just, transformative change. But we need to help light up people's imagination so they, too, can see that another world is possible.

In all our campaigns we advance ideas that some say are impossible. These visions and narratives are often developed and advocated for by those on the front lines of corporate abuse, particularly people in the Global South; Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian people; youth; women; and low-income people. They are the experts in both what the problems are and what the best solutions are. And together, we campaign to expand what's possible.

This work takes each and every one of us, and I am deeply grateful to be truth-telling and visioning in partnership with you.



Onward,

Patti Lynn
Executive Director

Supporting water justice movements across Africa

How our allies are demanding an end to water privatization

“The siege of multinational private water corporations threatens to hold Africa in bondage. But we the people say NO to the corporate capture of our water. Our Water Is Our Right.”

AKINBODE OLUWAFEMI | EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY
AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AFRICA (CAPPA)

Corporations that profit from privatizing water have long targeted Africa as an expansion market—and recently, they've been ramping up their privatization efforts around the region.

And following a historic, continent-wide gathering last spring that we helped convene, the Our Water, Our Right Africa Coalition has taken action to move public officials to reject privatization and support well-funded, equitable, and public water systems.

One such campaign is taking place in Cameroon, where a partnership between labor and civil society is challenging water privatization in the country. Led by the African Center for Advocacy and labor union SYNATEEC, organizers spoke to the national media detailing the failures of Cameroon's previous water privatization scheme.

You make it possible for Corporate Accountability to support this kind of localized—and internationally networked—campaigning.

And as activists and organizers representing African civil society and labor take action, we hope that you'll continue joining us in supporting these demands!

Q&A

Member spotlight: Frances Moore Lappé

Frances Moore Lappé is a bestselling author and the co-founder of the Small Planet Institute, which channels resources to democratic social movements worldwide.



“Diet for a Small Planet” touches on concepts such as hunger, food waste, and the corporatization of our food system. What are some ways that your thinking on these issues have evolved since you first wrote the book 50 years ago?

Over the years, I’ve slowly expanded my understanding about food. I think of what I advocate for as plant-and-planet-centered diets in the transition to sustainability. Basically, it’s not enough to just eat a plant-based diet—we still need to pay attention to how food and crops are grown, so that agriculture doesn’t lead to species decimation and great reductions in biodiversity—as it does today.

I also want to reframe democracy as having both a political and an economic dimension. In the U.S., income inequality is greater than

in more than 100 countries. The concentration of power that we’ve allowed to accumulate over the decades has infected and distorted our elected representatives’ abilities to govern and make decisions in the interest of the greater public. It’s become very clear that we can’t have a true political democracy unless it is also grounded in equity.

How would you like to see the system reset in the next several years?

Right now, monopolies dominate every single sector of our economy. I want to expose the myth that ours is a “competitive” economy. A free market doesn’t exist! And we can’t have corporate accountability unless there are rules that counter these monopolies.

I love the work that Corporate Accountability does to highlight and call out the impact of private wealth and wealth abuse. It is vital in helping people

understand the crises that we are living through. Everything works in connection. Economic and political democracy are inseparable. We can’t achieve equity and empowerment so long as we have a political democracy that lies in the pockets of private interests. As long as candidates are funded by private donors, the system will always benefit the ultra-wealthy and corporations.

Read more!

Learn more about Frances’ work and the latest edition of “Diet for a Small Planet” in an expanded online interview: CorporateAccountability.org/FrancesMooreLappe



Exposing Big Polluters’ dirty tricks

“We must build solidarity with grassroots struggles that are challenging the systems pushing the world to collapse, and build a just pathway forward.”

MARTIN VILELA | LATIN AMERICA CLIMATE CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR

(Continued from page 1)

Developments like this make it crystal clear how important it is to continue securing media coverage that unmask the truth and shifts the public narrative toward polluter accountability.

We will never be able to count the impact of this organizing in numbers alone. Still, this high-profile coverage matters because it makes it harder and harder for Big Polluters to evade scrutiny and

accountability for their role in fueling the climate crisis.

By and large, the public narrative is not buying into Big Polluter spin. Instead, we are seeing more and more coverage uplifting the voices, concerns, and demands of front-line communities. This is huge!

The demand to make Big Polluters pay is resounding all around the world, and we couldn’t have done it without you. Thank you for what you make possible!



Image credit: Cori Lin

Watch now!

View the video of front-line organizers at the U.N. climate talks voicing their demands: CorporateAccountability.org/ReclaimingCOP26

Expanding access to clean water

We and our allies keep water privatization out of historic infrastructure bill

“Our demand has always been clear: The federal government must substantively reinvest in our public water systems. And finally, it will.”

ALISSA WEINMAN | U.S. POLITICAL ORGANIZING DIRECTOR

The central demand of our U.S. water campaign has always been clear: that the federal government must reinvest in our water systems—and reject the privatization schemes of transnational corporations. And finally, after years of organizing with hundreds of organizations, it will.

Last summer, when we and our allies caught wind of potential water privatization provisions in President Biden’s landmark federal infrastructure bill, we sprang into action to make sure that these plans were rejected.

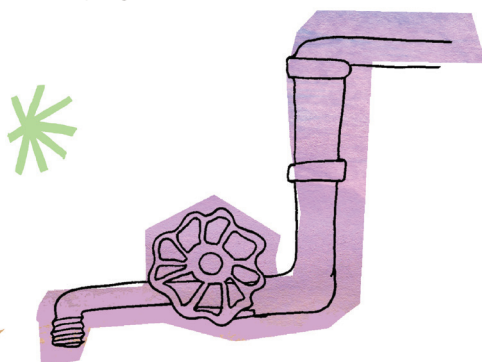
From holding call-in days and delivering petitions to recommending changes to drafts of the bill, we lobbied dozens of lawmakers alongside community leaders from the People’s Water Project. And despite attempts by the private water industry to influence this bill, we succeeded in keeping all water privatization proposals out of the final legislation!

With the bill being signed into law, we’ll continue to push for the public water funds to be allocated to and prioritized for the communities that

have been historically denied these resources, particularly Indigenous, rural, and low-income communities and communities of color. And we’ll also keep pushing for bold federal climate policy—an area where this bill fell drastically short of what we need.

Still, it’s hard to overstate how big of a deal this victory is. For many years, we’ve worked with cities, communities, and allies across the country to reject water privatization schemes and pushed back on corporate attempts to position privatization as a viable solution to water challenges.

Now, billions of dollars will be spent on upgrading water infrastructure around the country rather than lining the pockets of the private water industry. And at its core, this is what Corporate Accountability’s water campaign is all about!



Our dogged organizing over the past decade on Public Water Works! has helped shift the public narrative around water privatization, making it politically unfavorable to promote these plans and prompting many cities to reject privatization schemes. Image credit: Kah Yangni



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“Our lives and struggles are interconnected, and there can’t be progress for one person if everyone isn’t included. By giving monthly to Corporate Accountability, we know we are helping to support communities around the world fight for their rights—and making a tangible difference everywhere.”

DR. AUDREY GARRETT AND DR. CRAIG SEIDMAN | PUBLIC HEALTH PHYSICIANS, SURGEONS, PARENTS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS



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