

# spotlight

2021 Issue 3



Akinbode Oluwafemi, executive director of CAPP Africa, speaking to the crowd at a protest against Shell in Lagos, Nigeria. With your support, we and our allies are shifting the public narrative to advance climate justice around the world. Photo credit: CAPP Africa

## Shifting the conversation on climate in Africa

How you are strengthening the climate justice movement worldwide

**“Big Polluters will hide behind corporate spin to continue delaying climate action but we won’t fall for their lies.”**

HELLEN NEIMA | AFRICA CLIMATE CAMPAIGN  
DIRECTOR

### Learn more!

Read our report on net-zero, Big Polluters’ latest PR scheme: [CorporateAccountability.org/TheBigCon](https://CorporateAccountability.org/TheBigCon)

### Support this work:

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

Across Africa, the demand to make Big Polluters pay is growing. And with our allies at Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPP Africa), we’ve been solidly organizing to mobilize people across the continent to demand Big Polluters be held liable for fueling the climate crisis.

First, in April, we held an intensive, two-day training for journalists from several countries across Africa. At the training, our organizers spoke about Big Polluters’ interference in climate policy, the global movement to make Big Polluters pay, and the role the media can play in amplifying real solutions for climate justice.

Then, in May, organizers in cities across Africa took to the streets to

reject polluter-driven climate plans and demand real, equitable solutions to the climate crisis.

Timed with Shell’s shareholders’ meeting in the Netherlands, these powerful demonstrations earned hard-hitting media coverage in several African countries—with at least one of the articles written by a journalist who attended our media training.

Our work with partners like CAPP Africa is essential to advancing the kind of transformative change we’re after. Shifting the public climate doesn’t happen overnight, but through support of trainings and events like this, you are helping to make groundbreaking work possible—not just in the U.S. but also around the world.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# Building relationships, building trust, building a better world

## Dear friend,

The past year and a half has helped me appreciate my relationships even more deeply than I did before, and I imagine many of you have had similar experiences. During the height of the pandemic, I had to tap into my creativity to ensure my personal relationships thrived. When meeting up to share a meal is no longer an option, how do I keep those vital, personal connections alive? How do I show up as my best self for all of the relationships I hold dear?

As an organization, Corporate Accountability faced similar challenges. Yes, there were logistical issues of how to organize when in-person gatherings were impossible, but the last few years also asked us to deeply examine how we show up in our work with our allies. Every day, I'm reminded that the work to hold corporations accountable is a movement—and a movement needs relationships; it needs trust.

So we've been looking honestly at how to improve the way we show up in our relationships with our allies—some of which we've held for decades, some of which are brand new. How do we build on the strengths of our practices? How do we leverage our resources and experiences to advance the movement? And how do we shift the ways white supremacy and Global North dominance affect the ways we show up in these relationships?

This work is hard, it's messy, and it's absolutely necessary. It is the work of radical love and transformative change. We're engaging with it across the organization and beyond—from our work on challenging water privatization in the U.S. and on the African continent to our work to kick Big Polluters out of climate policy and make them pay for their role in fueling the climate crisis. We don't always get it right, and we are always striving to do better.

We know this is ultimately how we will win our campaign victories and create a more just world, together with members like you. Thank you for partnering with us. I'm honored to be part of this movement with you.



Onward,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patti Lynn".

**Patti Lynn**  
Executive Director

## Fighting for just and equitable utility access for all

We help shape Senate bill aimed  
at preventing utility shutoffs

**"We're campaigning to  
make sure that everyone  
has access to vital utilities  
like water, electricity, and  
broadband—especially  
during a pandemic."**

ALISSA WEINMAN | ASSOCIATE CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR

Since the start of the pandemic, we've been working closely with Senator Jeff Merkley from Oregon to stop the unjust practice of utility shutoffs. And in May, Senator Merkley introduced the Maintaining Access to Essential Services Act, which would prevent utility providers from shutting off services for people struggling to pay increasingly unaffordable bills.

Through the No Shutoffs coalition, we worked closely with the senator's team to craft this bill. These provisions are not only critical to making the implementation of a moratorium on utility shutoffs a reality across the country, but it would also direct sorely needed federal funds toward our water infrastructure—an important step that helps prevent the privatization of our water systems.

It won't be easy, but with the coalition, we'll continue organizing to make sure this bill passes in Congress and stop the industry from taking over public water systems. And your support will help uphold water justice everywhere. Thank you!

### Take action!

Urge your elected officials to  
invest in our water systems:  
[CorporateAccountability.org/  
Infrastructure](https://CorporateAccountability.org/Infrastructure)

# Q&A

## Member spotlight: Sayre Sheldon

Sayre is a human rights activist, philanthropic partner, and longtime supporter of Corporate Accountability. She is active in the anti-nuclear and climate justice movements.



Photo credit: Jon Chase photo

### How did you first become involved with Corporate Accountability?

I was—and continue to be—active in the anti-nuclear weapons movement, particularly through Women’s Action for New Directions (WAND), an organization I co-founded to advocate for nuclear nonproliferation. At the time, Corporate Accountability was organizing against General Electric and their role in manufacturing nuclear weapons. It seemed inevitable that I would try to combine our work together and since then, I’ve been a strong supporter of Corporate Accountability and its campaigns.

### In addition to WAND, you’re also actively involved with the group known as Elders for Climate Justice. Why are you committed to organizing around the climate crisis?

The heatwaves that have rocked the U.S. this summer are proof that climate change is not only inevitable, but it’s also already here. And having been involved in the anti-nuclear movement for so long, I see a lot of parallels between it and the climate justice movement. The biggest parallel, of course, is that both are existential threats that we need to confront and stop.

### How do you see your role in creating social change?

I believe that everyone has a part in doing what they can to support the causes they believe in. I’m turning 95 in September and I’ve been involved in organizing for social justice for a very long time. I’ve seen firsthand how people power can change the status quo, both through my work with Corporate Accountability and elsewhere. And after all these years, I still feel extremely hopeful about the future. I know I can’t stop organizing yet because there’s too much at stake.

## Moving further and faster to dismantle racism

### Our public commitment to advancing justice for Black people

During and following the uprisings for Black lives in the U.S. last summer, Corporate Accountability stepped into organizing for racial justice in a new way. This culminated in the recent release of a statement, developed under the leadership of Black staff, that details our renewed and deepened commitment to this work.

Racial justice is inseparable from creating a world where all people can live fully and freely—so this work is essential to our core mission. Moving

forward, we will focus on education, police violence, and reparations, as well as strengthening our relationship with Black-led organizations so that we can be true partners and work in deep solidarity with our allies.

This is a milestone in Corporate Accountability’s history. And this statement is our public measure of accountability to do the work toward advancing justice for Black people. Together, we can dismantle the structures that police, exploit, and oppress Black people—and build communities that can truly thrive.



**“It’s time to follow, engage, and support the actions of Black liberation leaders and organizations today so we can dismantle all systems of oppression tomorrow.”**

AKILI | PROJECT COORDINATOR

### Read the full statement:

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

Racial justice is inseparable from creating a world where all people can live fully and freely. We’re committed to doing the work essential for justice to Black people and communities everywhere. Image credit: Kah Yangni



# Demanding corporations stop messing with our democracy and our health

We bring the blistering heat to shareholders' meetings season

**"We tell the real story of how corporations' actions and abuses affect people and the planet."**

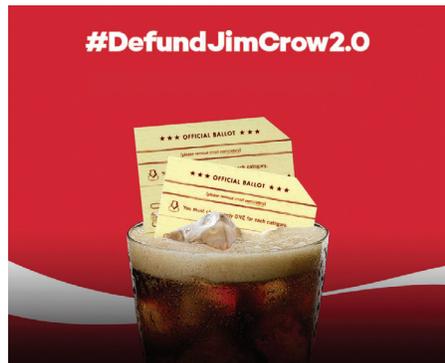
ASHKA NAIK | RESEARCH DIRECTOR

On April 20, CEO of the New Georgia Project Nsé Ufot spoke directly into the microphone. "You are fundamentally on the wrong side of history," she said to Coca-Cola's executives and shareholders at their annual meeting.

As dog-and-pony shows designed to put the best face on a corporation's profits and future plans, shareholders' meetings are where corporations do their best to impress their investors. This year, Coca-Cola's shareholders' meeting happened at a time of converging crises. Knowing this, we seized the opportunity to force Coca-Cola to face its abusive practices, such as marketing unhealthy sugary drinks to children, exacerbating racial disparities in public health by fueling diet-related diseases, and funding voter suppression in states like Georgia.

We worked in deep partnership with allies like Feed the Truth and the New Georgia Project Action Fund to call out Coca-Cola's executives and make it extremely clear that we see through the thin veil of their empty promises. In addition to speaking truth to power, we also launched a petition calling on Big Beverage to defund voter suppression and defended a resolution to protect public health over profits, garnering the support of hundreds of thousands of people across the country.

Curbing corporate power is a long-term endeavor that requires innovative strategies, fierce determination, and deep relationships. That's why it's so powerful when we and our allies show up to counteract corporate lies and distractions. And your support is an essential part in making these strategic partnerships that maximize the impact of our organizing possible. Thank you!



Shareholders' meeting season is about speaking truth to power, and together with our allies, we're building power behind our campaign for a healthier, more sustainable food system. Image credit: Feed the Truth.

## Take action!

Vote for Coca-Cola in the Corporate Hall of Shame:  
[CorporateAccountability.org/CorpHallofShame](https://CorporateAccountability.org/CorpHallofShame)

## Make a monthly gift

Sustain this work to protect human rights, people's lives, and the planet.

**Contact** Adwoa Addae, senior membership manager, at [info@CorporateAccountability.org](mailto:info@CorporateAccountability.org) or 617.695.2525.

**Visit** our website at [CorporateAccountability.org/MonthlyGift](https://CorporateAccountability.org/MonthlyGift)

**Send** in the enclosed envelope.

## Why monthly giving?

Your gift works faster and more efficiently to make a bigger impact. You receive insider campaign updates to keep up to date on the influential role you have in creating a more just and equitable world.

It's easy to participate, and you help save resources and expenses.

## Thank you for your partnership!



**"Understanding that all the issues I care about are rooted in the fact that corporations have too much power and influence was critical to realizing the power I had in demanding change. That's why I'm a proud supporter of Corporate Accountability."**

RACHEL PERRY | MONTHLY DONOR



**CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY**  
10 Milk Street, Suite 610 • Boston, MA 02108  
617.695.2525 • [CorporateAccountability.org](https://CorporateAccountability.org)



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