

# spotlight

2019 Issue 1



Deputy Executive Director Akinbode Oluwafemi of Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria, a Corporate Accountability board member, speaks at a massive rally for the human right to water in Lagos. Photo credit: ERA

## Members of Congress call for public water in Lagos

From the U.S. to Nigeria, you boost global campaign to stop water privatization

**"We are saying, in one voice, that clean water is a human right and it must be controlled by people."**

SHAYDA NAFICY | SENIOR PROGRAM DIRECTOR

### Take action!

Help secure access to clean, safe water in Lagos.

#### Donate here:

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

The intense heat of summer in Lagos, Nigeria did not deter the many people who had gathered to rally in the streets. They had come to the home neighborhood of the city's governor with one unified message: Water is a human right. It is not to be privatized.

For decades, water corporations have seen dollar signs in Lagos: Privatization in Africa's largest city could open the door to privatizing water across the continent. But thanks to members like you, our joint campaign with Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria (ERA) is stopping water privatizers in their tracks—and building power for public water.

We organized with 23 members of the U.S. Congressional Black Caucus and Congressional Progressive Caucus to build on their prior public support for and solidarity with the people of Lagos. They sent a public letter highlighting the perils of water privatization and connecting water justice struggles from Lagos, Nigeria to Flint, Michigan. The letter, combined with ERA's organizing in Lagos, made headlines and escalated pressure on public officials.

Our momentum is only building. This winter, thanks to your support, organizers, experts, and public officials from around the world will gather for a water justice summit in Abuja, Nigeria. Together with you, we're growing the campaign across Nigeria and beyond.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# Real democracy means curbing corporate power

Dear friend,

Over the last few months, I've found my thoughts returning again and again to one theme: our shared journey toward true democracy. I know many of you, too, have been grappling with what it means to advance democracy in these times.

The Trump administration has brought a rapid corporate takeover of the federal government—shredding decades of protections for people and the planet, violating human rights, and enacting dangerous foreign policy. All so corporations can profit with impunity.

But the roots of our problem go deeper than the current administration. For decades, corporate power run amok has corroded the pillars of democracy. People's lives, rights, and dignity are threatened every day, especially those of Black people, immigrants, people of color, women, LGBTQ folks, and cash-poor people.

It's that fundamental problem—unchecked corporate power—that you and I are taking on together. Every day at Corporate Accountability, our corporate campaigns are advancing the systemic change we need to wrest democracy from the clutches of corporations and place it into the hands of people in the U.S. and around the world.

Together, we are imagining and advancing a democracy that is truly responsive to the needs of people, not corporations. It's not going to happen overnight. But if we continue to act from a place of courage, hold on to our vision, and deepen our partnerships, we will get further down the road. And then, further still. Then, probably when we are least expecting it, we will reach a tipping point—followed by a cascade of transformation.

I am enormously grateful to partner with you in this global movement for corporate accountability.

Thank you for all you do.



Onward,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Patti Lynn'.

**Patti Lynn**  
Executive Director

## You expose the worst of the worst

Cast your ballot in this year's Corporate Hall of Shame



**"Sunlight is the best disinfectant. Shine a light on this year's worst corporations with your vote."**

SRIRAM MADHUSOODANAN | DEPUTY CAMPAIGNS DIRECTOR

Which corporation is the worst of the worst? It's time to cast your vote in this year's Corporate Hall of Shame.

In 2017, you named Koch Industries the world's most abusive corporation for undermining environmental protections, funding climate denial, and ensuring that the extraction and burning of fossil fuels can continue unabated, even as the world burns. We're taking on Koch, and other Big Polluters, for preventing the bold climate policy we urgently need.

Now, vote for this year's inductee. Will it be Exxon Mobil? Goldman Sachs? Nestlé? Or perhaps a corporation with less brand-name recognition but a weighty track record of abuses, like Beretta, nominated for profiting richly from gun manufacturing and funding the National Rifle Association, which obstructs commonsense gun safety measures.

Your voice powers the Corporate Hall of Shame. Vote now: [CorporateAccountability.org/CHoS18](https://CorporateAccountability.org/CHoS18)

# Q&A

## Member spotlight: Dr. Christine Runnels

Dr. Christine Runnels is a surgical specialist, an American College of Veterinary Surgeons member, and a social and environmental justice activist.



### How does Corporate Accountability's mission align with your values?

I am against cruelty and environmental destruction in the name of profit. Nobody has the right to destroy or take away our human rights, like clean

water, healthy food, and medical care, in the name of making even more money.

Corporate Accountability's values and campaigns coincide with those beliefs, and it really pleases me that you're doing something about it.

### How do you support this work outside your giving?

I spend a lot of time educating and recruiting people: I speak to them on an individual basis, I sign petitions, I go to the occasional march, and I forward emails from Corporate Accountability to others in my network. But right now, speaking to individuals is the bulk of the

work I do—because I believe that raising awareness is important. Large groups of people throughout the world are aware of these causes, working together, and achieving victories. When we're aware, we can work together; when we work together, we have a chance.

Every time I see an article in the paper, or hear a story on the radio—about Exxon Mobil having a say in climate policy, for example—I know that other people are reading or hearing it too, and they're becoming aware. And each story has the potential to get through to whoever's hearing it. That gives me hope.

## You win huge victory for public health

More than 180 countries act to kick Big Tobacco out of public policy

**"Big Tobacco is no match for the power of people. When we keep our vision clear and hope strong, we win."**

JOHN STEWART | DEPUTY CAMPAIGNS DIRECTOR



Irene Reyes (left) and Hellen Neima (right) participate in negotiating sessions as part of Corporate Accountability's team at the global tobacco treaty meetings.

This fall, you helped bring about a watershed moment in public health and corporate accountability history.

At the global tobacco treaty talks in Geneva in October, more than 180 countries came together to adopt a groundbreaking policy to kick Big Tobacco out of public health policy—and make the industry pay for its abuses worldwide.

For more than a decade, Big Tobacco and its proxies have skirted the treaty rules on delegations, formed front groups to access the global tobacco treaty talks, and claimed to be members of the media and the general public—all to undermine lifesaving public health policies. No longer! Governments took bold action to close these loopholes,

and are charting new ground in international law.

This monumental success is thanks to the thousands of Corporate Accountability members and supporters like you who took action, as well as our many allies and government champions from all over the world challenging the tobacco industry.

This move helps clear the way for bold policies to make Big Tobacco pay. And it sets a precedent for governments to take similar steps in other forums—like kicking Big Polluters out of the global climate treaty meetings.

Together, we'll power forward to keep winning big victories for people's lives and the planet.



# You expose corporate capture of the UN climate treaty

World governments demand people-first policies in the Paris Agreement



Lidy Nacpil, of Asian Peoples' Movement on Debt and Development, a longtime ally, leads a discussion about people-focused solutions to climate change during the People's Hearing in Bangkok.

**"At long last, power is shifting away from Big Polluters and toward climate justice. This is absolutely our moment."**

JULIA GABBERT | ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF MAJOR GIFTS

At the U.N. climate treaty talks in Poland this December, governments will gather to turn the U.N. climate treaty into real action. If Big Polluters have their way, the treaty will facilitate their profit-over-people agenda while global temperatures rise and millions of lives are lost.

But you've made it clear: The fossil fuel industry should have no say in the policies that will protect our planet.

In September, our team was in Bangkok, Thailand to attend the last round of climate negotiations before Poland. There, we paved a path forward for meaningful, just climate solutions at the U.N. climate treaty talks by blocking

Big Polluters from writing the climate treaty's guidelines to their benefit.

This is a huge step forward in our campaign to kick Big Polluters out of climate negotiations and safeguard the climate treaty once and for all.

Momentum is building. And with dozens of allies from around the world, we're launching the People's Demands: a vision for what truly just international climate policy, free of Big Polluters' corrosive influence and dangerous distractions, should look like. The demands provide a platform for people around the world to unite under a banner of hope, real action, and justice at the U.N. climate treaty talks.

This is our moment to advance true climate justice. We have the science, policies, technology, strategies, and allies we need. And with the help of members like you, we'll be at the talks this December, organizing with communities around the world to advance policies that put people and climate justice above Big Polluters' profits.



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## Make a legacy gift

Sustain this work to protect human rights, public health, and the environment.

- 1 Contact** Marcia Whitehead, deputy director: development at 617.695.2525.
- 2 Visit** our website at [CorporateAccountability.org/Get-Involved/Make-a-Legacy-Gift](http://CorporateAccountability.org/Get-Involved/Make-a-Legacy-Gift)
- 3 Send** in the enclosed envelope.

### Why legacy giving?

You direct your estate to something you care deeply about.

You have a personal way to meet your estate planning goals.

You guarantee deep and long-lasting change to build a more just and equitable world.

**Thank you for your partnership!**



**"Climate change is one of the greatest threats to our planet—and what could be more important than the planet? Corporate Accountability is an agent for change, and I'm proud to partner with you in challenging the fossil fuel industry at the U.N. climate talks."**

MARGIE WOLLAM | MEMBER SINCE 2012



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