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# Bloomberg and Clinton Merge Climate Groups

By **MICHAEL BARBARO**

Mayor [Michael R. Bloomberg](#) and former President [Bill Clinton](#), two of the world's most influential spokesmen for environmental sustainability, will merge their global climate groups under a plan to be announced on Wednesday morning, according to people told of the plans.

The new organization would combine [C40](#), a coalition of international cities run by Mr. Bloomberg, and the [Clinton Climate Initiative](#), a project of Mr. Clinton's philanthropic foundation, doubling the groups' annual budgets and staff, these people said.

At a time when domestic legislation and international treaties to address [global warming](#) are stalled, the merger represents a major bet on the future of population-rich cities as a laboratory for experimentation and action.

But, as much as anything, it marks a new partnership between two men — longtime friends and, now, fellow New Yorkers — whose star power, political reach and fund-raising skills could have far-reaching implications for climate change.

Mr. Clinton and Mr. Bloomberg are to appear together Wednesday morning at Gracie Mansion, the mayor's official residence, to disclose details of the combination to their employees. In a few weeks, the pair will deliver a joint address at an environmental conference in São Paulo, Brazil — the first of many such appearances, aides said.

C40 and the Clinton Climate Initiative, both founded over the last six years, seek to cut carbon emissions in major cities through programs that reduce energy use in buildings, promote mass transit over cars and reuse greenhouse gases emitted by landfills.

Cities account for about 2 percent of the world's land but 70 percent of carbon production. Yet to a greater degree than state and federal officials, mayors tend to have broad authority over areas like building codes and transportation systems that can substantially cut carbon output.

"For years President Clinton and Mayor Bloomberg have seen cities as the future for climate change action," said Jay Carson, an adviser to Mr. Bloomberg at C40 who will become chief

executive of the organization. “The combination between the two of them, because of their unique skills and global reach, will be incredibly powerful.”

The Clinton and Bloomberg groups have previously sought to work together, through a far less formal partnership, but the arrangement was plagued by problems, according to those involved. C40 was insufficiently financed and, despite the skilled advisers it put on the ground, the Clinton Climate Initiative did not promote the kind of global collaboration that C40 had expected.

The loosely coordinated system at times left city officials confused and employees of the groups working at cross purposes, these people said.

In November, when Mr. Bloomberg was elected chairman of C40, officially known as the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, he commissioned a detailed survey of how effectively the organization worked.

The weaknesses that surfaced led, over time, to discussions of an out-right combination — talks that involved Mr. Carson, a former aide to Mr. Clinton; Douglas Band, Mr. Clinton’s top counselor; [Bruce R. Lindsey](#), the chief executive of Mr. Clinton’s foundation; and [Rohit T. Aggarwala](#), a former City Hall aide who advises Mr. Bloomberg on environmental issues.

The talks, held at Mr. Clinton and Mr. Bloomberg’s foundation offices in Manhattan, repeatedly broke off, stumbling over issues of control and organizational structure, those briefed on the discussions said.

At the urging of Mr. Clinton and Mr. Bloomberg, their aides returned to the bargaining table and struck a deal in January, during a meeting at the Bloomberg Foundation on the Upper East Side.

Mr. Band, counselor to the former president, said that Mr. Clinton and Mr. Bloomberg “have enormous respect and trust for each other, so they are comfortable developing a partnership like this.”

The mayor and former president are known to dine and play golf together — and to share a growing sense of impatience with the failure of international climate negotiations to achieve meaningful progress.

They stood together in the summer of 2009 to announce that the Empire State building would begin renovations to reduce its energy use by 38 percent a year by 2013, a project they promoted as a model for skyscrapers around the world.

The newly combined organization is expected to have a budget of about \$15 million and a staff

of 70. The group will have main offices in New York, Los Angeles and London. Mr. Clinton and Mr. Bloomberg will each control the appointment of three board members, which are expected to include [Ira C. Magaziner](#), chairman of the Clinton foundation's climate initiative; Mr. Aggarwala; and Mr. Carson, a former deputy mayor in Los Angeles.