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## THE ROLE OF NEW CITY PLATFORMS

- C40 CITIES: MAYORS TAKING AMBITION TO THE NEXT LEVEL

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- 100 RESILIENT CITIES, PIONEERED BY THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

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- A VIEW FROM MADRID CITY COUNCIL

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In little more than a decade, C40 has established itself as one of the most influential global network of cities.<sup>1</sup> Gathering 96 of the world's largest cities, which account for more than a quarter of global GDP, C40 helps mayors to exchange, design and implement the policies that most effectively address the impacts and causes of climate change.

### I. A network of mayors, led by mayors

Mayors are central to C40's history and governance. In 2005, the mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, seeing that the G20 gathering in the UK wouldn't discuss climate change, invited 20 of his fellow mayors to create a working group on the issue. That is how C40 was born. By 2008, the group had doubled in size and during the chairmanship of David Miller, the charismatic mayor of Toronto, C40 began to demonstrate that "*while nations talk, cities act*", rallying in Copenhagen to showcase their progressive climate actions. Michael Bloomberg, the three-term mayor of New York City, who became chair in 2010, turned C40 into a highly professional organisation,<sup>2</sup> and started to support it financially through his philanthropy.<sup>3</sup> Under the leadership of Eduardo Paes, the mayor of Rio de Janeiro, between 2013 and 2015 the network dramatically expanded its membership from the Global South and, ahead of the Paris Climate Conference (COP21), adopted a city diplomacy strategy to engage more effectively in global politics. The mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, was elected C40 Chair in 2016 and during her mandate member cities have focussed on delivering their fair share of the Paris Agreement through the flagship Deadline 2020 programme. Mayoral leadership within C40 is further enhanced through the C40 Steering Committee, a group of 17 mayors elected by their peers in each region, which is the formal decision-making body that sets the strategic direction for the network.<sup>4</sup>

### II. The C40 model: seven keys to success

The enlightened leadership of the world's most powerful mayors certainly explains a good part of C40's success, but not all of it: there are other distinctive features that make the C40 model unique. First and

1. The official full name is C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group.
2. C40 work is currently organised in seven regions, 15 policy networks and eight transversal programmes. See [www.c40.org](http://www.c40.org) for more information.
3. Bloomberg Philanthropies is one of C40's strategic funders, jointly with the British philanthropy CIFF (Children's Investment Fund Foundation) and the Danish philanthropy Realdania. Other philanthropies, national governments and private sponsors support specific C40 projects. This business model allows C40 not to charge membership fees to its members.
4. In October 2018, the mayors of Accra, Boston, Copenhagen, Dhaka, Dubai, Durban, Hong Kong, London, Los Angeles, Medellín, Milan, Nanjing, Paris, Quito, Santiago, Seoul and Tokyo are members of the C40 Steering Committee, with the mayor of Paris serving as chair.

foremost, the single issue of climate change provides a firm clarity of purpose. Second, C40 is driven by an ambitious vision to deliver on the most ambitious goal of the Paris Agreement and keep global warming to 1.5 degrees. This leads to bold policy options based on robust science and data-driven knowledge. Third, global thought leadership is promoted through agenda-setting communications. Fourth, the format of a closed-door club brings exclusivity,<sup>5</sup> social capital and recognition, inside and outside the network (see Hansen and Pinault, 2018). Fifth, a set of underlying programmes of peer-to-peer exchanges and technical assistance for climate action planning and implementation. Sixth, strict participation standards create strong interpersonal relationships, both at political and technical levels.<sup>6</sup> And finally, highly qualified and committed staff have been recruited from the highest levels of city leadership.

### III. City diplomacy in the era of ambition

A unique organisation, C40 is nevertheless 100% connected with the ecosystem of global city networks (see Acuto, 2016; Travers 2016), with whom it shares many members. Most of C40's diplomatic activity is undertaken in collaboration with peer city networks like Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), under the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA),<sup>7</sup> the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments,<sup>8</sup> or the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy.<sup>9</sup> Those collective advocacy platforms played a key role in positively influencing the intergovernmental process in the lead up to COP21. Now in the implementation phase of the Paris Agreement, C40 mayors keep leading the way, making bold commitments to achieve emissions neutrality by 2050, establishing sectoral targets on renewable energy, zero-emission transport, buildings and waste by 2030, and championing similar ambition by national governments and other non-state actors. At a time when "visionary political leadership", "radical collaboration" and "exponential action" are the only ways to keep global temperatures to a safe limit,<sup>10</sup> the role of cities and city networks like C40 has never been clearer. It is to push for urgency, ambition, hope and collaboration, for the benefit of all people on our shared planet.

### References

- Acuto, M. «Give Cities A Seat At The Top Table». *Nature*, vol. 537 (2016).
- Hansen, S., Pinault, E. «Mayors on the global stage: a political star is born». *Økonomi&Politik*, vol. 91, n.º 3 (September 2018).
- Tavares, R. *Paradiplomacy: Cities and States as Global Players*. Oxford University Press, 2016.

5. C40 is only open to megacities (with a population of 3 million inhabitants or more within their metropolitan area) and a smaller group of so-called Innovator Cities, which due to their exceptional track record in tackling climate action have been approved as C40 member cities by the 17 mayors which together make up C40's Steering Committee.
6. To remain within C40, cities have to comply with strict participation standards. They must have an expected level of network activity and climate policy ambition. For example, they need to do a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory which follows the globally recognised Global Protocol for Community (GPC) standard, establish set targets to reduce their GHG emissions and report annually on their progress on these targets. Cities that do not comply can be moved into an "Inactive" membership category which limits their opportunities to get access to C40 support and technical assistance, and ultimately they can have their membership annulled.
7. LGMA is one of the nine major groups recognised as observers by the United Nations Convention Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
8. [www.global-taskforce.org](http://www.global-taskforce.org)
9. [www.globalcovenantofmayors.org](http://www.globalcovenantofmayors.org)
10. According to Christiana Figueres, former Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention of Climate Change: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/08/limiting-warming-to-15c-is-possible-if-there-is-political-will-climate-change>