

**STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH AND INDEPENDENT NGOS (RINGOs)
to the High-Level Segment, November 17, 2006
COP 12/MOP2, Nairobi**

Mr President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Climate change is many things. It is complex. It is urgent. It connects with many other issues. The problem is not straightforward, nor is the solution.

The RINGOs can help making sense of this complexity, as we are organizations focussing on research and analysis to develop sound strategies for addressing global climate change. Normally, we are only found in side-events and exhibitions, which delegates are often unable to attend because of their busy schedules. Our messages may therefore not always reach you. We are thus particularly grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this high-level segment by means of this statement.

Let me start with some words of self-reflection. As organisations involved in research, we evolve. Increasingly, we're not only studying the science of the problem, focussing on trying to fully grasp the uncertainties that are inherent to climate change, but we're moving into the "science of the solutions". We should not wait for the availability of perfect insight in the problem for making recommendations on real action. For instance, we are doing assessments and we're coming up with improved ways that could contribute to reaching an environmentally, politically, socially, and economically effective post-2012 climate agreement.

We are also increasingly aware of our role as communicators. We are keen to interact with the policy dynamics more closely in order to facilitate the uptake of science straight into the decision-making process. It is also critical that all stakeholders and policymakers put additional effort into gaining an understanding of the differences of approaches and remedies. It is an essential step towards mutual understanding that can generate both a more transparent knowledge base and the necessary trust and credibility towards civil society.

The RINGO constituency involves more than just natural scientists, economists and engineers. Climate-relevant insights from the political and social sciences are developed more and more, and increasingly provide methods and information that can be of direct use for your deliberations. The complexity of how to tackle climate change cannot be fully understood without recognising the interplay with non-climate factors. Political science therefore indicates that widening of the issue scope can make a difference. We should consider linking climate change with related issues, such as poverty eradication and equity, biodiversity, industrial development, energy policy and air pollution. Building synergies among these would enhance the policy space available for domestic and international responses to climate change. Climate change should not be seen in isolation.

As an example, trade liberalisation and the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change are currently managed under separate and complex legal regimes. If the linkages between these regimes were to be enhanced, we might be able to ensure that domestic and international policy measures to address climate change and the international trade system are mutually supportive. Similarly, technological cooperation is a critical factor for sustainable development. Members of the RINGO constituency are engaged in research to identify the barriers to and possibilities for both hard-ware technology transfer, and the transfer of knowledge and capabilities. We thus hope to contribute to the abilities of non-Annex I countries to develop clean industries domestically, and to formulate effective policies.

One of the areas where insights from RINGO members can also be helpful is in the field of development, poverty reduction and adaptation to climate change. This conference has featured an array of side-events that addressed these issues in an integrated manner, and the research community suggests that this is indeed an effective way forward. Simply said: development needs to be climate-proof, and climate policy needs to be development-proof.

Another, quite different, scientific issue we would like to draw your attention to concerns the recent alarming results of the serious impacts of CO₂ concentrations in the atmosphere on the acidity of the oceans, and possibly on ocean life. In order to solve the acidification problem, the reduction of non-CO₂ greenhouse gases does not bring much, nor does adaptation. If this is to be solved, CO₂ emissions should be reduced. CO₂ is not only about climate change; it may also concern the protection of ocean life in a more direct way.

Lastly, we would like to remind you of the upcoming IPCC Fourth Assessment Report. When we meet again, in one year time, we will have a wealth of new, authoritative, relevant and reliable information on the science of climate change, impacts and adaptation, and the options and policies for mitigation. Without going into the preliminary results of the reports, we would like to encourage you to use and include the spirit of those results in your discussions.

Mr President, climate policy making began with the scientific insights from the research community. It will hopefully also end with research results confirming the right way to move forward. Sound science underpins much of what has been said over the past two weeks. We hope that we can find the ways to bring research insights to the policymakers fora. We intend to continue to inform the Convention and the Protocol process, and thank you again for the opportunity to address such a distinguished and honourable audience.