

STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH AND INDEPENDENT NGOS

COP 9 – MILAN, ITALY

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Research and Independent NGOs group, I would like to thank you very much for the opportunity to make a contribution to the plenary of the Ninth Conference of the Parties. It is clear that the UNFCCC process takes the contributions of non-government stakeholders seriously and for that the RINGO community is grateful. We would also like to thank the country of Italy and the city of Milan for being such gracious hosts of the Ninth Conference of the Parties.

As you are no doubt aware, Mr. Chairman, we are a relatively new constituency in the Convention process, although many of our member organizations have been involved as independent non-government stakeholders for quite some time. For the most part, our group is comprised of independent, not-for-profit research and academic institutes that are committed to addressing climate change in a constructive manner. While we are also independent to the extent that we do not seek to reach consensus on any one particular issue, indeed we are exploring a variety of approaches, we all are actively involved in seeking ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and/or the impacts of those emissions. In that respect, the RINGO community represents organizations that carry considerable policy and analytical expertise in the areas of mitigation, adaptation and sustainable development.

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Whether in the international negotiations or in domestic policy discussions, these issues identified in this high level discussion are all too often cast as competing policy priorities. Our experience is demonstrating that instead we should pursue an approach which seeks to use adaptation and mitigation as complementary measures that should work to recognize the primacy of each nation's right to continue to develop. What do we mean by complementary.

At the global level, it simply means that no amount of adaptation can forestall the need for some form of serious mitigation over this century. Yet, we also recognize that adaptation is necessary today as the impacts of climate change are already being felt. And we should not forget that even at 450 ppmvs, significant adaptation investments will be required.

At the project level, it is our view that that there are promising mitigation opportunities with a strong adaptation component, such as in the fields of decentralized renewable energy, rural agro-ecosystems and zero tillage. Another classic example is the planting of trees in urban areas – they sequester carbon as they grow, they reduce urban heat stress in the summer and they reduce the need for air conditioning.

But first and foremost, Mr. Chairman, real political will and leadership is required. And that is lacking. We can devise the most impressive scenarios we want, but without political will we will go nowhere. The RINGO constituency believes that opportunities will present themselves through broad and creative thinking. That requires, first, engaging a wider range of actors and decision makers, including economics ministries and development experts. Second, it means avoiding political rhetoric as well as attacks on the results of sound scientific research. Third, it means considering the consequences of a range of policies not only for ourselves, but also for our children's children.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.