

## THIRD MEETING OF SIGNATORIES TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY BIRDS OF PREY IN AFRICA AND EURASIA

(Dubai, 3-6 July 2023)

UNEP/CMS/RAPTORS/MOS3/Report/Rev.1

### MEETING REPORT

#### Agenda Item 1. Opening of the Meeting

1. Her Excellency (H.E.) Mariam bint Mohammed Saeed Hareb Almheiri, Minister of Climate Change and Environment of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), welcomed participants to Dubai and the UAE, which was honoured to host the Third Meeting of Signatories (MOS3) of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU). She thanked Environment Agency Abu Dhabi (EAD) and the team at her Ministry for their preparatory work. She underscored that 2023 was a special year for the UAE, with its motto of sustainability, and hosting of the United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 28<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP28). She emphasised the urgency of conservation as a collective commitment and the need to respect nature and enlighten youth. The UAE had a great interest in the conservation of birds of prey, and the Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*) was a government symbol. The UAE regulated falconry and the falcon trade, whilst its falcon hospital was a key facility for rehabilitation. As a Signatory of the Raptors MOU, the UAE worked to secure a safe future for raptors and their ecosystems. The Mohamed bin Zayed (MBZ) Raptor Conservation Fund supported a wide range of projects embodying a spirit of partnership and innovation, resonating with the critical goals of climate action. She hoped that participants would be present at UNFCCC COP28, to lend birds of prey a strong voice at that meeting.
2. Ms Amy Fraenkel, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), thanked the hosts, expressing deep gratitude to EAD for its long-term support to the CMS Office - Abu Dhabi, and special thanks to H.E. Mariam Almheiri for her leadership and vision. She thanked all Raptors MOU Signatories and Cooperating Partners. Migratory species formed an essential part of ecosystems, connecting continents and habitats through their migration routes, and were of biological, economic and cultural importance. CMS and its daughter agreements played a key role in conserving migratory species and their habitats, enabling countries to work across borders for shared species. Migratory raptors were declining rapidly, and pressures on migratory species continued to move many towards extinction. Climate change was already having major impacts on birds, but birds also contributed to climate change mitigation. Ms Fraenkel applauded the Government of the UAE in its upcoming hosting of the UNFCCC COP28 and congratulated the CMS team in Abu Dhabi for its tremendous work in organising this Meeting. Noting its importance for future implementation of the Raptors MOU, she wished all participants a successful Meeting.
3. Ms Rouba Abou-Atieh, Executive Coordinator of the CMS Office - Abu Dhabi, thanked the UAE Government for hosting the Meeting and EAD for its generous support. She noted that the triple

planetary crisis required forging strong relationships to face challenges head on, and protecting migratory birds of prey transcended preserving habitats. Raptors faced a dire future, yet they played a crucial role as indicators of biodiversity and environmental health, and provided cultural services. Of 93 migratory species covered by the Raptors MOU, 34% faced a high extinction risk, notably vultures. The Vulture Multi-species Action Plan (Vulture MsAP) was comprehensive, and a West Africa Vultures Conservation Action Plan (WAVCAP) was underway. The financial support of EAD and other partners was crucial for this work. The Raptors MOU was set to launch the International Single Species Action Plan (ISSAP) for Sooty Falcon (*Falco concolor*), and was actively addressing bird collisions and electrocutions caused by energy infrastructure as well as illegal hunting, trapping and trade. Despite numerous challenges, she highlighted reasons to celebrate, with the Raptors MOU expanding to 61 Signatories, and some significant conservation progress, including the improving status of vultures in Europe through projects supported by the European Union (EU) and reduced mortality caused by Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs) in South Asia. Expressing deep thanks to EAD for supporting the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU since 2009, she urged the Meeting to contribute resources to deliver and implement its mandate, and to ensure that birds of prey continued to grace the skies.

#### **Agenda Item 4. Election of Officers**

4. In accordance with Rule 7 of the Rules of Procedure, the Meeting was invited to elect a Chair and Vice-Chair, with a tradition within the CMS Family that the host country be invited to chair the Meeting. The UAE accepted the Meeting's request, and His Excellency Mohammed Al Hammadi was elected as Chair.
5. The Chair thanked all delegations for electing him, and invited them to propose nominations for Vice-Chair. Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States nominated South Africa, supported by Saudi Arabia. There being no objections and no other nominations, South Africa, represented by Ms Humbu Mafumo, accepted the nomination and was endorsed as Vice-Chair.

#### **Agenda Item 5. Document [UNEP/CMS/RAPTORS/MOS3/Doc.5\(Rev.1\)](#). Adoption of the Meeting Agenda and Schedule**

6. The Chair invited the Meeting to review the provisional annotated agenda and submit any comments, questions or proposals. There being no requests from the floor, the Meeting agenda was adopted.

#### **Agenda Item 3. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.3](#). Adoption of the Rules of Procedure**

7. Mr Umberto Gallo-Orsi (Coordinating Unit) highlighted a few minor changes to the Rules of Procedure that had been proposed, including some reordering and amendments to acronyms. The Chair invited the Meeting to adopt the Rules of Procedure as amended.
8. India requested clarity on whether, once adopted, these amended Rules of Procedure would apply for this Meeting "until such time". The Coordinating Unit confirmed that the changes would apply, unless they were amended again in the future.
9. Zimbabwe proposed adoption of the changes made, seconded by Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States.
10. The Meeting adopted the Rules of Procedure for Meetings of Signatories to the Raptors MOU as revised in Annex 1 to the document.

## Agenda Item 7. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.7](#). Admission of Observers

11. At the invitation of the Chair, the Coordinating Unit reminded the Meeting of paragraph 13 of the MOU Text, indicating that Observers would be admitted unless one third of Signatories objected. The Coordinating Unit presented a list of non-Signatory Range States and agencies/bodes that had registered, and the Meeting was invited to admit the Observers listed. Recognising the important role of civil society to the Raptors MOU, Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States welcomed the list of Observers and supported their admission, seconded by Saudi Arabia.
12. The Meeting approved participation of the Observers as listed in Annex 1 to this report.

## Agenda Item 8. Statements from Signatories, Cooperating Partners and Observers

13. Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States thanked the Government of the UAE for generously hosting the Meeting, EAD for its strong support and the CMS Secretariat and Coordinating Unit. Noting that countries must act within their own borders to conserve raptors and share their efforts with other countries and partners, they looked forward to working together with all Signatories and Observers for effective implementation of the MOU and its Action Plan.
14. The United Kingdom (UK) extended its gratitude to EAD, the Government of the UAE and the Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit. The UK welcomed the opportunity to come together to work with Signatories to implement the MOU Action Plan, and highlighted and thanked the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) for its excellent work.
15. Saudi Arabia thanked EAD for its continuous support to the CMS office in Abu Dhabi, and the Raptors MOU team for its hard work. Saudi Arabia made sustainability a key part of its 2030 Vision, with policies to protect the environment and enforce hunting and protected areas legislation. All endemic species were protected, and it planned for protected areas coverage to reach 30% of both terrestrial and marine areas. It was working to mitigate the impacts of electrocution, which affected birds of prey, and the spread of disease. The Steppe Eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*) played a crucial role by feeding on organic waste.
16. India reported that more than 50 raptor species had a high level of protection in India, which was implementing an action plan for vultures, with vulture breeding centres established. India had hosted a CMS meeting for Range States of the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) to agree on conservation priorities and actions for migratory birds and their habitats, and appreciated all work done by the Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit and the UAE.
17. South Africa congratulated the Government of the UAE and looked forward to work with all delegates to define future priorities. In response to implementing the Raptors MOU Action Plan, South Africa had developed a biodiversity management plan for vultures and was facilitating an integrated approach to their conservation, noting their role in fulfilling essential ecosystem services. South Africa had submitted a proposal to the CMS 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP14) to list the South African population of Bearded Vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*) on CMS Appendix I.
18. Thanking the Government of the UAE, Zimbabwe expressed its commitment to support the objectives of the Raptors MOU and looked forward to signing the MOU in the near future. Zimbabwe added that it had developed a national vulture plan.
19. Egypt highlighted its importance for migratory birds and its commitment to their protection, also outlining key threats of climate change, urban development and waste, habitat degradation and the energy sector. Egypt noted the need for mitigation strategies for migratory birds, especially at

bottleneck sites, and for effective messaging. Egypt had developed monitoring protocols, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) studies for wind energy projects and a sensitivity atlas, and initiated assisted turbine shutdowns during key bird migration months to minimise collisions. It planned to develop EIA guidelines and quality control tools, provide training for ornithologists and set bird corridors, whilst it had established a centre of excellence on bird monitoring. In June 2023, Egypt declared its plans to increase renewable energy to over 40% by 2025.

**Agenda Item 9. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.9](#). Report of the Coordinating Unit**

20. The Coordinating Unit presented the document, which covered the period 2015-2023, and honoured the memory of Mr Nick Williams, who led the unit from 2011-2020, but sadly passed away in 2021. His enormous contribution was long-lasting.
21. During the reporting period, eight Range States signed the Raptors MOU (Croatia, Israel, India, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Ethiopia), increasing Signatories from 53 to 61. Several countries had been invited by the Coordinating Unit to join the Raptors MOU, selected both strategically and opportunistically, especially for their importance for globally threatened birds of prey. In Asia, only 40% of Range States were Signatories. The Coordinating Unit maintained a database of all National Contact Points (NCPs), with the latest information available online, whilst an updated NCP Designation Form had been created.
22. Paragraph 12 of the MOU Text called on Signatories to develop national or regional strategies or equivalent documents and submit these within two years of signing the MOU. As none had been received by early 2018, the Coordinating Unit advised postponing MOS3 to use the interim period to develop such strategies. Several Signatories reported progress. National strategies were under development in Pakistan and Morocco, and South Africa finalised a national vulture strategy.
23. The Raptors MOU Action Plan came into effect in November 2008, and was due for review within seven years; this was done in 2020. The review identified several areas to enhance the clarity of the Action Plan, resulting in the proposal of amendments to the MOU Text and Action Plan.
24. The Coordinating Unit continued to support the activities of the TAG, which formally met three times during the period, and assisted in revisions of the TAG's Terms of Reference (TOR).
25. It provided support to the Saker Falcon Task Force (STF) since its establishment and worked with its members and Chair to support implementation of the Saker Falcon Global Action Plan (SakerGAP), including facilitating two Discussion Groups and preparing meeting reports.
26. It supported the Vulture MsAP, adopted by CMS in 2017, including producing its implementation plan (2020), supporting the Mid-Term Implementation Review and proposing draft decisions for discussion at CMS COP14. It convened an informal NSAIDs Working Group that developed a fact sheet to raise awareness about the threat of these drugs to vultures, and contributed to the Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) New LIFE Project. In reaction to the Crisis of Vultures in West Africa, the Coordinating Unit supported development of WAVCAP, including organising a workshop in Abuja, Nigeria, in October 2022.
27. The Coordinating Unit was finalising the ISSAP for Sooty Falcon and revived the Sooty Falcon Action Group. It circulated a survey to consider development of an Action Plan for the Steppe Eagle, although no financial support had been identified. It contributed to the CMS Energy Task Force (ETF) and the CMS Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean (MIKT) in addressing threats to raptors, and supported promotion of a CMS initiative to tackle illegal hunting, trapping and trade of wild birds in South West Asia.

28. The Coordinating Unit maintained active communication with Signatories and others and kept the Raptors MOU up-to-date, with 67 news items published since MOS2. It also regularly collaborated with the Dubai Municipality in celebrating World Migratory Birds Day (WMBD).
29. The Coordinating Unit 2024-2026 Workplan would be shaped by the outcomes of this Meeting. Core activities anticipated included supporting implementation of the Raptors MOU, the TAG, development of National Conservation Strategies and finalising the Vulture MsAP Mid-Term Implementation Review. Fundraising was essential, as many activities were funding dependent, including launching a Bottleneck Site Monitoring Network and a Priority Habitats Project.
30. The Meeting noted the contents of the report and urged Signatories to communicate to the Coordinating Unit any updates in their NCPs using the form referred to in paragraph 15 of the document.
31. Signatories were invited to support the Coordinating Unit in raising resources to implement its Workplan 2024-2026, and Signatories, Range States, Cooperating Partners and other stakeholders were encouraged to collaborate in the mobilization of resources, including through the provision of voluntary financial contributions to the Raptors MOU.
32. Signatories, Cooperating Partners and other relevant stakeholders were further encouraged to invite non-Signatory Range States of migratory birds of prey to join the Raptors MOU.
33. Welcoming the report and the accomplishments achieved, as well as efforts to increase the number of Signatories, South Africa encouraged all Signatories and partners to mobilize resources and enable implementation of the key initiatives highlighted in the report.
34. Taking note of the comprehensive report, Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States congratulated the Coordinating Unit for its work and supported the conclusions and way forward.
35. Morocco highlighted its priority to implement a National Conservation Strategy for birds of prey, with the support of the autonomous community of Andalucía (Spain), for which a final report was due in September 2023 and recruitment of a new coordinator planned.
36. Stressing the need for strong capacity to better implement the Raptors MOU, Chad urged that capacity building for Signatories be emphasised in the report and in future activities of the Coordinating Unit, for which financial resources would be required. Chad further urged for improved synergy at the national level with National Focal Points of other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) to improve mutual understanding, including in relation to climate change policies, which often lacked inclusion of wildlife.
37. Niger expressed support for Chad, noting a lack of technical capacity in Niger. Although a guide to help officers recognise key species such as Egyptian Vulture and Lappet-faced Vulture (*Torgos tracheliotos*) had been produced, vultures were still hunted for belief-based practices, and capacity building was needed to train protected areas officers. This, and producing a clear inventory of species, would enable Niger to better focus its conservation efforts.
38. Saudi Arabia supported the report, as well as the need for Signatories to emphasise capacity building through their NCPs.
39. Angola supported the report and emphasised the importance of cooperation between Signatories, and with international partners, as well as with Range States that were not Signatories, especially those that shared threatened migratory raptors. Hosting one of the largest known populations of Red-footed Falcon (*Falco vespertinus*), during the non-breeding season, Angola lacked expertise

for its protection, but had received some support from Hungary, and recommended that a working group be established for this species.

40. Sudan considered that its Wildlife Research Centre had an important role to play in implementation of the Raptors MOU and its Action Plan in Sudan, noting that Sudan also needed more training and capacity building, including in the field of applied research.
41. Noting its support for the report, The Gambia highlighted the need for resource mobilization, especially in relation to the WAVCAP, for which livelihoods support and alternative income generation for people involved in the trade of vulture parts were vital components.
42. Israel noted that it could not offer financial resources for key initiatives highlighted, but it could offer data from tracking birds of prey. It sought greater collaboration with neighbouring countries, notably Türkiye, a non-Signatory, and considered that wider collaboration was vital, as many raptors died from anthropogenic factors along their flyways.
43. The Meeting agreed to add the following activities to the list of activities contained in paragraph 41 of the document, which would integrate the Coordinating Unit's Workplan 2024–2026:
  - a. building capacity of Signatories, including NCPs, in priority raptor conservation issues
  - b. supporting Signatories to strengthen collaboration with non-Signatory Range States, especially those that supported threatened migratory raptors.

**Agenda Item 10. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.10](#). Report of the Technical Advisory Group**

44. The TAG Chair, Mr Des Thompson, presented the document, summarising the work undertaken since MOS2, including an assessment of the activities listed in the TAG Workplan 2016-2020 and a list of species assessed by the TAG for potential inclusion in Annex 1 (List of Species) of the Raptors MOU.
45. The TAG was established with an interim membership at the First Meeting of Signatories (MOS1) (2012) to provide expert advice and information and to make recommendations on implementing the MOU and its Action Plan, with formal membership introduced at MOS2 (2015). Since MOS2, the TAG had met five times, though most work occurred on an intersessional basis.
46. Of the 20 activities listed in the TAG Workplan 2016-2020, 60% were fully completed, 25% partially completed and 15% not addressed.
47. The TAG had developed several proposed amendments to the MOU, with the final version endorsed at the Fourth Meeting of the TAG (TAG4) for submission to MOS3. The proposed amendment relating to the changed names of two countries was endorsed at TAG4, while the change of the name of Türkiye was agreed upon through an online consultation in early 2023.
48. Concerning the nomenclature of species, TAG also discussed the impact of splitting Brown Boobook (*Ninox scutulata*) into four species and Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*) into two species. The migratory status of other species was also assessed, and endorsements made for site list amendments, notably concerning the approach taken and new sites proposed by the Syrian Arab Republic.
49. TAG5 discussed a revised Workplan for the period 2023-26 updating the current Workplan and introducing various changes as detailed in document UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/15.3.

50. The TAG Chair paid tribute to Mr Sadegh Zadagan, who retired from the TAG in 2021, and to two key TAG supporters who died in 2021: Mr Jean-Marc Thiollay, who contributed significantly to raptor research and conservation, especially in West Africa; and Mr Nick Williams, who was a great force for nature and was pivotal to the development of the Raptors MOU. Finally, he acknowledged the support of Vice-Chair Mr André Botha, other members of the TAG for their tireless contributions, and to the Coordinating Unit for its unstinting support.
51. The Meeting was invited to note the contents of the report and seek any clarifications. Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States took note of the comprehensive report and the many achievements of the TAG.
52. The MBZ Raptor Conservation Fund highlighted the passing of Mr Peter Mundy, a stalwart for vulture conservation in Africa, and informed the Meeting about a raptor conservation fund focused on conservation leadership in memory of Mr Jean-Marc Thiollay. France paid tribute to Mr Michel Terrasse, who died in 2023, and who carried out significant work on vultures and Lesser Kestrel (*Falco naumanni*). The Chair requested the Meeting to also recognise the contributions of Mr Peter Hellyer, based in Abu Dhabi, who passed away just before the Meeting (2<sup>nd</sup> July 2023).

## **Agenda Item 12. Review of Implementation of the MOU**

### **Agenda Item 12.4. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.12.4](#). Status of Development of Raptor Conservation and Management Strategies and Equivalent Documents**

53. Ms Lauren Lopes (Coordinating Unit), introduced the document. Paragraph 12 of the Raptors MOU Text called for Signatories to prepare and submit to the Coordinating Unit, within two years of the MOU becoming effective, national or regional strategies or equivalent documents for Category 1 and, where appropriate, Category 2 species. The MOU Text further states in Paragraph 20 that Signatories should endeavour to finance implementation of raptor conservation and seek assistance for financing and implementing their strategies or equivalent measures.
54. By 2023, the Coordinating Unit had received 16 raptor conservation and management strategies or equivalent documents from nine Signatories, although others were under preparation. Guidance had been available to support the development of national or regional strategies since 2012, and a template that Signatories could build on to develop these documents. A range of other documents were also presented as useful to guide Signatories in addressing specific threats including a document listing the species occurring in each Signatory's territory.
55. The Meeting was invited to take note of the current rate of development of national or regional raptor conservation and management strategies; the guidance currently available to support Signatories in developing those documents; and the guiding information provided on species occurrence per Signatory's territory. The Meeting was further invited to identify necessary steps to strengthen implementation of the MOU regarding development of strategies, to discuss the requirement to develop such documents and the reasons and challenges behind the current development rates, and to consider how the Coordinating Unit could best support implementation.
56. Noting that the EU had a strategic approach to raptor conservation, Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States considered that a regional strategy that underpinned national strategies would fulfil EU requirements, noting that the EU had a strategic approach to raptor conservation. Raptor action plans were also needed to guide implementation of conservation. Spain suggested that the TAG explore ways to further develop strategies.
57. South Africa considered the guidance useful, but recommended that greater emphasis should be placed on promoting synergies and maximising efficiency. It indicated that National Biodiversity

---

Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) could be linked to raptor strategies.

58. The UK supported retaining commitment for national and regional strategies, noting that England's Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) Action Plan aims to achieve a self-sustaining population.
59. Chad identified low capacity and financial means as challenges for developing countries to prepare national strategies; the low number of documents submitted demonstrated the need for support. Regional initiatives would help countries to progress with national strategies.
60. The UAE highlighted its work to strengthen conservation efforts, including for Sooty Falcon, satellite tracking and establishment of protected areas, and recommended further support for strategy development through sharing best practices, capacity building workshops and fostering collaborations. The UAE was at an advanced stage in producing a national raptor plan.
61. Madagascar had integrated biodiversity into national planning, so it was possible to fight poverty while using its natural capital. It had a national plan for the conservation of Malagasy raptors, and called upon the international community to support conservation of birds of prey.
62. Kenya reported that it hosted 15 raptor species in Category 1, 13 in Category 2 and up to 31 in Category 3, whilst most Category 2 species were expected to move to Category 1, due to ongoing threats of habitat degradation and fragmentation, poisoning, electrocution and collision with power lines, and climate change impacts, including drought. Kenya indicated that it mitigated threats through governmental and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) bodies addressing habitat conservation, through protected areas and community conservancies, anti-poisoning work and engaging energy companies responsible for low voltage infrastructure. Kenya's Wildlife Research and Training Institute had an important role in wildlife research, and a national Vulture MsAP was being prepared. Kenya had established three raptor rescue, rehabilitation and release centres.
63. India supported Paragraph 12 of the Raptors MOU Text, but noted challenges in implementing and monitoring Action Plans, which should further be included in national legislation. In India, 50 raptors were under national protection.
64. Armenia reported that it has a good national bird monitoring programme, including of raptors, and produced two to three single species articles per year, with assessments. It supported preparation of strategies, but there might be difficulties or delays to include them in ministerial procedures.
65. Niger recommended development of a regional strategy for West Africa, which could be adapted nationally based on priorities identified in each country. Niger added that regional strategies should include non-Signatories, and capacity building was essential for implementation. Niger requested support of the Coordinating Unit in the development of regional strategies.
66. Morocco considered that the ambition of Paragraph 12 was relevant for raptor conservation, but some countries, especially in Africa, had challenges to develop strategies; conservation measures were still needed, even in the absence of strategies. Morocco encouraged regional strategies to support countries in the implementation of ISSAPs for migratory species. Synergies between MEAs were needed for the Global Biodiversity Framework, as well as improved coordination at the national level, especially between CMS and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) with respect to raptors.
67. Saudi Arabia supported the document, noting challenges in implementation of strategies and for effective mitigation of threats. Integration with other instruments, such as NBSAPs, was important in this respect, for which guidance would be welcome.



68. Israel noted that the difficulty for governments to prioritise developing national strategies, as the Raptors MOU was a non-binding agreement, requiring stronger commitment; responsiveness for binding agreements could be higher.
69. Hungary recommended the review and revision of Annex 2 of the document in order to remove the occurrence of “Vagrant” species, which should not be a focus of national conservation efforts.
70. In agreement with Niger, Chad highlighted the need for a regional strategy for West Africa with a global vision, which would provide useful guidance and adaptation for the development of national strategies, further emphasising the support of the Coordinating Unit in this process.
71. Morocco questioned how regions should be defined for the development of regional strategies, noting that Morocco was inspired by Spain in the development of a national strategy, as the two countries shared many migratory raptors.
72. With respect to regional strategies, the Coordinating Unit recommended that an analysis was needed to determine the right approach, either a flyway approach or a regional approach. In comparison to flyway strategies, regional strategies, such as for the four regions of Africa, could facilitate implementation, with potential lessons to learn from the CAF.
73. In follow-up to interventions of Saudi Arabia and Morocco, BirdLife International also advocated building raptor conservation strategies into NBSAPs, noting the narrow window of time to achieve this before the next CBD COP, and the role of migratory raptors as indicators of biodiversity.
74. In common with other African countries, Sudan highlighted that it shared challenges in relation to capacity building and political situations. Some key protected areas in Sudan, such as Dinder National Park, were at international boundaries, so regional conservation efforts were important.
75. Zimbabwe considered that a lack of synergy with other MEAs beyond the CMS Family was a challenge that could cripple the capacity of Signatories to implement strategies at the national level. Zimbabwe, which was implementing an approved vulture strategy, encouraged Signatories to develop national action plans to address national priorities, which could be linked to monitoring.
76. Saudi Arabia reminded the Meeting of the recommendation of H.E. Mariam Almheiri concerning building activities into climate change mitigation plans, such as for windfarms.
77. The Coordinating Unit noted the recommendations to integrate raptor conservation actions into NBSAPs, to build synergies with CBD and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), on the value of regional strategies involving non-Signatories and on the need for capacity building. It suggested that a questionnaire be used to explore thoughts on pursuing national versus regional approaches to raptor conservation.
78. The Meeting agreed to mandate the Coordinating Unit to develop a questionnaire to gauge interest in the development of regional strategies and to look into options for organising capacity building to integrate raptor needs into NBSAPs.
79. Noting the need to synergise with the CBD, India questioned how integrating raptors into NBSAPs would be achieved. The Coordinating Unit clarified that NBSAPs were valuable public tools presenting a practical opportunity for integration, and whilst national and/or regional documents were needed to guide the conservation of raptors, building actions for raptors into NBSAPs could reduce the reporting burden.
80. The Meeting took note of the slow progress by Signatories in developing national or regional

raptor conservation and management strategies, as well as the guidance available to support Signatories in developing those documents.

81. The Meeting agreed that developing these documents was key to ensure the conservation of birds of prey and their habitats, that this ambition should remain at the core of the Raptors MOU, and that the specific challenges raised to their development should be addressed.

**Agenda Item 12.2. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.12.2](#). Results of the Pilot Site Network Analysis**

82. On behalf of the TAG, Ms Vicky Jones (BirdLife International) presented the document, which aimed to help deliver advice and recommendations on gaps in the network of sites for Annex 1 species, and on strengthening the comprehensiveness of that network. Taking the draft Table 3 in Annex 3 of the Raptors MOU as an ecological network of sites, the analysis considered how well this network supported migratory raptors. A pilot analysis was conducted using a sample of 11 Annex 1 species to identify major gaps in different parts of their range, and to assess whether gaps were genuine. Three species had no sites listed in draft Table 3, whilst a further 28 species listed on Annex 1 had no sites of international importance identified.
83. Among other species, gaps in the site network were noted for Cinereous Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*) and Pallas's Fish-eagle (*Haliaeetus leucoryphus*), whilst Egyptian Vulture had significant gaps in the southern parts of its range. Some sites were listed for Lappet-faced Vulture where it was likely now extinct. Very few sites were identified for Amur Falcon (*Falco amurensis*). The TAG considered that the analysis gave a useful overview, and scaling up to other Annex 1 species could be feasible. Some pilot species were under-represented in parts of their range, whilst others had undergone range restrictions; the site approach was not suitable for all species.
84. The Meeting was invited to review the information, discuss its value and determine whether such analyses should be expanded to all other Annex 1 species.
85. Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States considered this to be a valuable exercise that should be expanded to include all species under the MOU pending availability of resources.
86. Angola found the analysis interesting and informative, noting that Lappet-faced Vulture occurred from Cuando to Okavango in Angola, where it was shown as "possibly extinct" on the map.
87. The UK reiterated support to expand this analysis to all other species on Annex 1.
88. Saudi Arabia appreciated the analysis, and thought that some information could be added or updated with input from Signatories and Cooperating Partners.
89. Morocco considered that this useful analysis should be extended to cover other species, but recommended proceeding with caution in relation to monitoring and verifying information. Signatories should be invited to provide further information on the sites and correct data, for instance updates from raptor inventories at key sites.
90. Noting that that the authors had included different types of species in the analysis, Armenia considered it very valuable, and that it should be expanded to cover other species.
91. The Gambia concurred that the analysis should be expanded, and countries encouraged to contribute information, noting collaborative work in The Gambia with the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and in waterbird monitoring with the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative. It recommended that CMS / the Raptors MOU could support countries in data collection and how to report back.

92. The Coordinating Unit noted the importance of waterbird monitoring, with the International Waterbird Census (IWC) being a long-running monitoring scheme, and the need to consider how to improve monitoring raptors.
93. The Meeting agreed that the pilot site network analysis undertaken provided great value towards strengthening the comprehensiveness of the site network for raptors, and agreed that such analysis should be expanded to all other Annex 1 species, and to all species listed under the MOU if resources were available.

**Agenda Item 12.3. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.12.3](#). Conservation Status Assessment Report (CSAR)**

94. Ms Vicky Jones (TAG member) presented the document. The CSAR highlighted that 34% of Annex 1 species were at an elevated risk of extinction, with vultures at an alarming 93%. The deterioration in conservation status of the subset of 76 Annex 1 species consistent from MOS1 to MOS 3 appeared to have slowed since the Raptors MOU came into force, but the conservation status of the wider set of 94 proposed Annex 1 species was deteriorating more rapidly. 53% of Annex 1 species had declining populations, with vultures and eagles having the highest percentage of decreasing populations, followed by hawks and harriers, and falcons. Overall, 75% of the Category changes on Table 1 of the MOU between MOS2 and MOS3 reflected deteriorations in conservation status or population trend. Key threats found were habitat loss and degradation from agriculture and logging, killing or taking and electrocution by and collision with energy infrastructure. There was an urgent need to address existing unsafe power infrastructure, noting that bird-safe designs were now available.
95. In comparing the Raptors MOU Annexes with the CMS Appendices, Black Harrier (*Circus maurus*) could readily qualify for CMS Appendix I, and Snowy Owl (*Bubo scandiacus*) for CMS Appendix II. Species identified as being in poor conservation status lacking a formal Action Plan and proposed conservation actions were Beaudouin's Snake-eagle (*Circaetus beaudouini*) and Tawny Eagle (*Aquila rapax*). The TAG further identified Steppe Eagle, Black Harrier and Pallas's Fish-eagle as priority species with gaps in species action planning.
96. The TAG identified four key areas of conservation actions needed: protecting sites, communication and awareness, improving legislation and enforcement, and implementing conservation actions, for which many tools were available. Major knowledge gaps hindered conservation efforts, whilst Signatory support for research and monitoring was vital. Signatories and stakeholders urgently needed to address threats and take positive measures for raptors in their countries and cooperate on joint initiatives to share resources, expertise and capacity.
97. The Meeting was invited to endorse the CSAR and ask the TAG to produce an updated report in time for the next MOS.
98. Noting that the report includes important elements, Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States appreciated this comprehensive report and supported both actions requested, also recommending that success stories should be taken into account. Egypt agreed that success stories should be added to or be emphasised in the report.
99. Noting its support for the report and its actions requested, Saudi Arabia questioned the prioritisation of Black Harrier, which only occurred in two countries. In reply to Saudi Arabia, the TAG member indicated that Black Harrier was the only Raptors MOU Table 1 proposed Category 1 species not yet listed that qualified for CMS Appendix I, and NGOs have shown interest in developing conservation plans for this species.

100. The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) considered that the fact that Black Harrier only occurred in two countries should not be a reason to neglect this migratory species with a clear conservation need. The EWT was developing a species conservation action plan, working with Signatories involved and other stakeholders, and would appreciate support of the Meeting in this process.
101. Noting its appreciation for owls to be mentioned in the report, Finland, which had ten owl species breeding, considered that a changing climate might lead to an increase in owl movements.
102. Noting the prioritisation given to an action plan for Steppe Eagle, BirdLife International suggested that Parties propose additional text for COP14 calling for the development of a Steppe Eagle ISSAP. It was likely that an agreement would be forged for the CAF at CMS COP14, for which the Steppe Eagle was a powerful indicator.
103. The Meeting endorsed the CSAR contained in Annex 1 to the document, and requested that the TAG produce an updated version of that report to submit to MOS4.

**Agenda Item 11. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.11](#). Report of the CMS Secretariat**

104. Mr Iván Ramírez (CMS Secretariat) presented the document, which reported on relevant work undertaken by the CMS Secretariat since TAG4. CMS carried out a Flyways strategic review in 2022-23, which noted the need to link CMS migratory bird instruments with other initiatives. One instrument with which synergy could be strengthened with the Raptors MOU was the African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Action Plan (AEMLAP), which aimed to improve the conservation status of all migratory landbirds. There was agreement to define an institutional framework (the CMS Central Asia Initiative), and the CAF Meeting in Delhi in May 2023 was a milestone for boosting development of a CAF framework, which would also address raptors in the region. The Government of India was willing to host a CMS CAF Secretariat.
105. In relation to poisoning, CMS Resolution 11.15 provided a mandate for an Intergovernmental Task Force on Phasing Out Lead Ammunition and Lead Fishing Weights, with progress made in the EU, which CMS hoped to expand to other parts of the world, partly through its Lead Task Force. The European Chemicals Agency developed recommendations to restrict lead shot use, endorsed by CMS. There was a Vulture Poisoning workshop in Guinea-Bissau in May 2022.
106. CMS Resolution 11.16 on the prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds (IKB) and Decisions establishing the MIKT and the Task Force on Illegal Hunting, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (ITTEA) linked strongly to raptor conservation. A concept note and fundraising brief were developed to set up a South-West Asia Illegal Taking Task Force.
107. Another key area of relevance to raptors was a CMS initiative to understand the use of avian wild meat of CMS-listed species, with a focus on African-Eurasian flyways.
108. Acknowledging the hard work of the CMS Secretariat, Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States took note of the report and supported its recommendations, and welcomed the synergies shown between the Raptors MOU and other frameworks.
109. Saudi Arabia took note of and supported the report, though recommended improved synergy between AEMLAP and the Raptors MOU, and looking more deeply into poisoning, especially in the wintering areas of migratory landbirds and from the impact of insecticides.
110. Whilst congratulating CMS on its preventing poisoning resolution and in getting a lead task force

up and running, BirdLife International noted that the Preventing Poisoning Working Group had been dormant for many years and considered that responsibility for it could be shared with different CMS groups. It also questioned how CMS could expand the control of lead shot to other areas beyond Europe. It further considered that clear actions were needed to combat NSAID poisoning of vultures, and suggested that the Raptors MOU Vulture Working Group could take on responsibility to address this issue. Responsibility to address the use of rodenticides, which largely impacted birds of prey, could also potentially be given to the Raptors MOU.

111. The CMS Secretariat noted that the important issues raised by BirdLife International should be addressed, and the dormancy of the Preventing Poisoning Working Group due to a lack of capacity could be taken forward to CMS COP14.
112. The Meeting took note of the contents reported in the document and of the recommendations made in relation to further building synergies and reviewing responsibilities.

## **Agenda Item 12. Review of Implementation of the MOU**

### **Agenda Item 12.1. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.12.1](#). Reporting by Signatories and Cooperating Partners: Synthesis of the Results of a Trial Run Using the Proposed Future Reporting Format**

113. Mr Dave Pritchard (Coordinating Unit) presented the document, which was a synthesis of submitted national reports. The reporting trial provided an updated survey of implementation activity and served as a test run of a proposed future reporting format. High level key messages from reports comprised successes, difficulties and future priorities. The synthesis provided insight into response rate, submission periods, completeness of responses, the period of information reported, coherency and consistency, and supporting alignment for comparative analysis between the MOU and CMS reports.
114. The Meeting took note of the contents reported in the document.
115. Armenia considered that if there were tools to measure the implementation of ISSAPs at the national level, they could also be used to analyse implementation of the Raptors MOU by Signatories.
116. Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States took note of the synthesis, which provided useful input, and suggested to follow along these lines for future reporting.
117. Saudi Arabia observed the importance of considering policy in the synthesis, in relation to which the Coordinating Unit recommended to include building on successes and improving ranking, whilst the relationship between the most pressing problems and future priorities might be indirect.
118. South Africa supported adoption of the reporting format, which was in line with the CMS.
119. Kenya expressed concern on standardising quantification of threats for different countries, and recommended availing another form to qualify specific threats so that they were standardised.

### **Agenda Item 12.5. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.12.5](#). Strengthening the Monitoring of Listed Species**

120. The Coordinating Unit presented the document, which informed on two approaches aimed at supporting the monitoring of raptor populations, conservation research and taking appropriate remedial measures. Of 20 Raptors MOU Signatories that submitted National Reports, 14 carried

out systematic and coordinated national monitoring programmes. The East African-Eurasian Flyway represented a key route for migratory soaring birds, with over a million birds passing through the larger bottlenecks. The Coordinating Unit had developed a project concept to develop an initial network of sites along this flyway, where bottleneck sites provided a perfect training opportunity, where the presence of birdwatchers / tourists could also provide income. To ensure that all Category 1 species were properly monitored, the Bottleneck Site Network Initiative should be complemented by regional monitoring strategies. This approach required regional assessments of monitoring programmes, monitoring strategies and plans for implementation.

121. Mr Sergey Dereliev (Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA)) presented the AEWA Waterbird Monitoring Framework. He reminded the Meeting that AEWA provided a legal mandate for waterbird monitoring. Data were used to review population status (size and trends) through the AEWA Conservation Status Report (CSR), which informed triennial revisions, including of Table 1 of the Agreement, and assessments. AEWA had developed priorities for monitoring development and national monitoring scheme guidelines. It was important to prioritise, to have a resourced coordination mechanism in place, to form synergies and provide regular feedback.
122. He informed that the African-Eurasian Waterbird Monitoring Partnership, comprising national agencies and over 80 organizations and with a high reliance on volunteers, supported the development of national monitoring schemes and improvement of monitoring information. The Waterbird Fund supported strengthening monitoring along African-Eurasian flyways; developing capacity was a key component. Analysed bird data were required by MEAs, and potential options on strengthening synergies included timing of analyses and international surveys. Integrated and population monitoring were important for understanding the drivers of population change and for (harvest) management purposes.
123. Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States supported development of the monitoring network, especially in the East African-Eurasian Flyway, noting that the Straits of Gibraltar presented a huge opportunity to count raptors and study migration patterns, as well as providing major potential to raise awareness. Such migration corridors could provide many advantages, and count results carried out over several years represented an important database.
124. Saudi Arabia took note of the report, and noted the need to clarify regional aspects.
125. Zimbabwe took note of the report and reaffirmed its commitment to continue supporting these initiatives at the national and regional context. Zimbabwe sought clarification on expected outputs. The Coordinating Unit replied that there were plans to facilitate the development of the network through developing guidance, conducting trials at a limited number of sites, before expansion, with a key focus on building capacity of the network.
126. In agreement with the EU and its Member States, the UK supported the development of a monitoring network.
127. Somalia noted that it was a very important country for migratory birds, well positioned on different flyways and with a long coastline.
128. Noting the contents of the document and the inspiring level of monitoring being carried out, Morocco recommended to follow AEWA's example. Networks required resources and capacity building, and the participation of scientists and others were needed at the national level. The governments of many countries lacked resources and capacity to set up monitoring networks, and depended on scientists and NGOs.

129. Armenia stressed the importance of promoting bird watchers to contribute to raptor counts, in countries like Armenia or Georgia. The Hawk Mountain Sanctuary implemented a similar model, and 30% of their income was from visitors.
130. Appreciating the input of AEWA for lessons learned and acknowledging the importance of monitoring, South Africa took note of the report, and encouraged the Coordinating Unit to consider other flyways, funds permitting.
131. Giving an example of IWC shared exercises with Senegal and with support from international partners, The Gambia stressed the importance of networking and involving partners in the network, including national and international NGOs.
132. Niger noted that monitoring in Niger depended on the availability of resources; even the IWC, carried out over numerous years, was no longer a regular activity, and there was unfortunately a break in data collection.
133. Being a key country of the East African-Eurasian Flyway, Sudan expressed its wish to see information gaps filled, and offered to organise to collect and submit data, when feasible.
134. The Meeting agreed to support the development of a network of sites that would provide the opportunity to efficiently monitor Annex 1 species and to encourage non-Signatories to the MOU to join this initiative.
135. The Meeting requested that the Coordinating Unit pursue the development of the network of sites, subject to the availability of resources, and facilitate the development of regional monitoring programmes.

#### **Agenda Item 14. Institutional Arrangements**

##### **Agenda Item 14.1. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.14.1](#). Proposed Amendments to the MOU Text and Annexes**

136. Mr Dave Pritchard (Coordinating Unit) introduced amendments proposed by the TAG to the Raptors MOU Text, Annex 2 (Geographical Scope) and the introductory section and Table 2 (Activities) of Annex 3 (Action Plan). Proposed amendments to the MOU Text were to add references to *Accipitriformes*, rationalise links between the MOU Text and the Action Plan and minor grammatical corrections. The TAG proposed rationalising and streamlining paragraph 8 of the General Conservation Measures in the MOU Text and align paragraph 4 Priority Actions in the introductory section of the Action Plan (Annex 3) and a new Table 2 (Activities) with less actions and clear measurable targets and means of verification. The proposed changes improved overall structural logic, coherence and consistency. The only proposed changes to Annex 2 (Geographical Scope) were for three changed country names.
137. Ms Vicky Jones (TAG member) introduced amendments proposed by the TAG to the Raptors MOU Annex 1 (Species List) and to Table 1 (Species Categorisation) and Table 3 (Sites List) of Annex 3 (Action Plan). She indicated that the species list provided the basis for Annex 3 Tables 1 and 3, and changes to the species list could result from new information becoming available on the migratory status of a raptor species or a taxonomy / nomenclature change.
138. In relation to new taxonomy, the TAG proposed to replace Brown Boobook (*Ninox scutulata*) on Annex 1 with Northern Boobook (*N. japonica*) after the former was split into four species, only one of which (the latter) was considered migratory. The TAG also proposed to add Yellow-billed Kite (*Milvus aegyptius*) to Annex 1, after Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*) was split into two species, both

of which were considered migratory. The TAG deliberated on other candidate Annex 1 species, including ten raptor species whose movement behaviour warranted closer attention, and Bonelli's Eagle (*Aquila fasciata*), which was proposed by a Signatory. The TAG further reviewed the categorisation of species on Annex 3 Table 1 (Species Categorisation) according to their global and regional conservation status, resulting in 13 moving to a Category that would reflect worsening conservation status and 3 moving to a Category that would reflect improving conservation status.

139. The TAG proposed amendments to Annex 3 Table 3 (Sites List) to present a more comprehensive updated list of internationally important sites, including the addition of 157 sites important for the 18 species newly listed on Annex 1 at MOS2. Additional amendments requested by the EU also resulted in proposed removal of 48 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) from six countries. The original Table 3 was a provisional list only including congregatory sites and covering a limited number of Range States. A more comprehensive site list was developed at MOS2, incorporating sites covering all life cycle stages of migratory raptors.
140. The Meeting was invited to review the proposed amendments in conjunction with the information provided and adopt them.
141. Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States agreed to the changes proposed to the MOU main Text, Annex 1, Annex 2 and Annex 3 main text and to Tables 1 and 2.
142. Israel accepted the amendments proposed, but considered that Bonelli's Eagle, which was probably in dramatic decline, should be added to Table 1. The Coordinating Unit answered that the TAG considered that there was insufficient information at the time of the review to reconsider a decision for this species, but could reconsider this in future if updated data was made available.
143. Armenia considered that Category 2 was unclear in relation to Unfavourable Conservation Status within Range States. The TAG member answered that a species only met Category 2 if it was considered to have Unfavourable Conservation Status at a regional level; the TAG planned to define what was meant by "a region".
144. Saudi Arabia noted the amendments and reminded that more information might be forthcoming for different species in future. Saudi Arabia supported looking more closely at Bonelli's Eagle.
145. Commending the comprehensive approach, the UAE supported the proposed amendments to the MOU Text and Annexes, which were a significant step forwards; the inclusion of new species reflected a dynamic understanding. The UAE wished to propose one new site to Table 3, and recommended more explicit references in relation to sustainable financing. The Coordinating Unit requested the UAE to submit the proposed site, which it would put to the TAG for consideration by the next Meeting.
146. South Africa supported the proposed amendments to the MOU Text, which helped to streamline the text and order it in a more logical manner. South Africa recommended a few changes - replacing the term "killing" by "taking" in two places and retaining explicit references to threats that were proposed for removal. South Africa supported the proposed amendments to Annex 3 Table 3, though recommended removal of Amesfoort-Bethal-Carolina from the site list.
147. Djibouti supported the amendments made, but asked to know more about the movements of Yellow-billed Kite. The TAG member replied that the proposed addition of Yellow-billed Kite to Table 1 was due to a taxonomic change, but noted that although there was limited information on this species, there was enough to show that it is an intra-African migrant.



148. Somalia requested clarification on transferring species between Annexes, in relation to threats and the impact of climate change. The TAG member reiterated that the Categories were based on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species, for which birds were updated by BirdLife International on behalf of IUCN.
149. Noting the absence of receipt of written comments to the species listing, the Coordinating Unit proposed adoption of the species amendments, to which the Meeting agreed.
150. In reference to Annex 3 Table 2 Activity 1, the UK noted that the previous version of Activity 1.2 mentioned “deliberate disturbance at nest sites and communal roost sites”, and considered this specific reference to communal roost sites helpful, especially in relation to Hen Harrier. For Activities 1.2 and 1.3, the UK sought reassurance and confirmation that the legislative reviews under “data source” would be taken from Signatories’ National Reporting, with no introduction of additional reports. For Activities 1.4 and 3.2, the UK sought similar reassurance that any proposed scorecard would be marked as voluntary and that Signatories would be given the opportunity to shape, comment and agree. The UK welcomed Activity 1.3 relating to the review of legislation, and recommended that rodenticides be highlighted here, given the high risk they posed to raptors.
151. In reference to Annex 3 Table 2 Activity 4, the UK expressed concern about the significant threat of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenzas (HPAI) to raptors, noting unprecedented outbreaks reported across flyways. Noting that 2022 saw a significant outbreak of Avian Influenza in the UK and parts of Europe, especially affecting seabirds and waterbirds, the UK was also concerned for its impact on raptors and achieving adequate monitoring and surveillance. NatureScot had released a report indicating that White-tailed Sea-eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) were severely impacted in coastal areas, with breeding success dropping from 66% in 2021 to 45% in 2022 in the Western Isles of Scotland, suggesting a possible link between infected seabirds and waterfowl that eagles might have preyed on or scavenged. Impacts had been recorded for other raptors.
152. In light of the risk of HPAI to raptors, the UK proposed an additional Activity 4.3: “*Undertake relevant surveillance for diseases which may pose a threat to bird of prey populations, including monitoring and testing for the presence and impact of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenzas (HPAI) in domestic and migratory raptors and take, where necessary, timely effective action*”, with the target “*effective surveillance and monitoring programmes in place*”, indicator “*Number of effective surveillance and monitoring programmes*” and data source “*National reports*”. The UK hoped Signatories would consider and support its proposal.
153. India appreciated the work done by the TAG, but considered that a few texts needed greater clarity in Addendum 6 (Proposed Amendments to Table 2), notably the reference to a “periodic self-assessment exercise (to be determined)” as a data source and the judiciary as a main actor for Activity 1.4; and the data source “commissioned survey (to be developed)” for Activity 7.2; whilst Activity 9.1 could include regional cooperation mechanisms as well.
154. Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States accepted all changes as formulated by the Coordinating Unit, and, in agreement with the intervention of the UK, supported incorporation of rodenticides and HPAI including surveillance.
155. The Coordinating Unit reported that written comments had been received from Switzerland, which believed that the timescale foreseen for activities in the Action Plan was in parts unrealistic, and which proposed removal of a number of sites in Switzerland from Annex 3 Table 3.
156. The Coordinating Unit had also received comments on the proposed amendments from Hungary, following its recent updates of the Standard Data Form of the Natura 2000 network. Hungary proposed to include qualifying species with a significant population at a given site and exclude

species with a non-significant population in Table 3,.

157. In reference to the MOU Text Annex 3 Table 3, Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States agreed to include SPAs listed for EU Member States, which were official sites designated under the Birds Directive. The EU and most Member States also agreed on proposed Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs), although Sweden and Denmark wished to have their IBAs removed from the list. Noting that the site list did not seem to be based on the latest information, they encouraged Range States to revise lists for their respective countries.
158. Saudi Arabia agreed with amendments to Table 3 and the site list, but wished for some flexibility, as some countries, including Saudi Arabia, had not finished updating their IBAs and were looking more closely at Key Biodiversity Areas.
159. The UK agreed to retain the UK SPA list with two additional sites and the removal of one site, and wished to retain 24 IBAs where its analysis showed an overlap with SPAs. The UK would analyse where there might be further overlap, for instance with Sites of Special Scientific Interest and would update the Coordinating Unit accordingly.
160. Noting that the situation of certain protected areas in each country was different, Israel informed that about 30% of its area had full protection. However, although the IBA analysis began in the 1990s, IBAs had no legal protection or structure, and it was necessary to review and reassess them to check their current relevance in partnership with the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, and report to the next MOS.
161. Morocco agreed with the proposed amendments, noting that the lists of species and sites should be considered as being of a dynamic nature, requiring work between MOSs to review them.
162. Saudi Arabia accepted the document's conclusions, but urged Signatories to update and submit new information on raptors regularly, as the situation for sites tended to change rapidly.
163. Armenia questioned if development of IBA criteria had been recently revised, in coordination with the Raptors MOU and CMS. The TAG member offered to provide answers after review.

**Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/CRP.1](#). Amendments to Proposed Amendments to the MOU Text and Annexes contained in UNEP/CMS/RAPTORS/MOS3/DOC.14.1**

164. The Coordinating Unit presented the document. In reference to new Activity 4.3 on HPAI, Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States considered the text "domestic and migratory raptors" confusing, and proposed replacing it by "domestic birds and migratory raptors." In the right column relating to data source, they suggested "national reports and other available sources."
165. Noting the proposed changes, the UK suggested amending "domestic and migratory raptors" to "native and migratory raptors." India suggested to replace this text simply with "raptors", which was agreed. The UK suggested further text for other columns.
166. Armenia considered that the MOS should consider the influence of herbicides on populations of hares, which in turn influenced populations of large raptors, like Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*). The Coordinating Unit invited Armenia to submit a proposal in writing in relation to this issue.
167. After reviewing the Amendments to the Proposed Amendments to the MOU Text and Annexes and noting, in Addendum 6 Table 2 Activity 4.3, the amendment from India and addition of text for columns 2-5 by the UK, the Meeting approved the document.

**Agenda Item 14.3. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.14.3](#). The Form Amending Annex 1 of the Raptors MOU**

168. The Coordinating Unit presented the document. The form comprised a part providing compiler's details, guidance and criteria for inclusion in Annex 1, guidance on taxonomy, geographic area, the definition of migratory species and regarding sources of supporting data, and a part seeking justification of the proposed listing.
169. Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States agreed to the proposed form.
170. The Meeting adopted the amendments to the *Form for proposal of species for addition to Annex 1 of the Raptors MOU* as presented in Annex I to the document.

**Agenda Item 14.2. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.14.2\(Rev.1\)](#). Amendment to the Form for Proposing or Amending Sites Listed in Table 3 of the Raptors MOU Action Plan**

171. The Coordinating Unit presented the document. The main amendments included the name of the form, addition of two columns, one indicating if the form proposed a new site or an amendment of a site already listed in Table 3, another providing reasons for the amendment.
172. Morocco questioned if sites required international recognition to merit proposal, or if sites classified as being of national importance or under national legislation could qualify.
173. The Secretariat responded that site of national importance should be included in the National Raptor Conservation Strategies as Table 3 lists only sites of international importance.
174. India questioned what "amendment of a site" referred to in the form, and what information needed to be added. The Coordinating Unit replied that this feature of the form would enable a Signatory to include any relevant new data or information, such as an updated species list for a site already listed on Annex 3 that indicated a change in the species occurring at the site.
175. Saudi Arabia recommended that it should be possible to remove a site already listed from the form, which no longer met criteria for listing. The Coordinating Unit replied that it was envisaged that an amendment could include addition or removal of sites with justification for that amendment.
176. South Africa recommended that if an amendment could include removal of a site from the list, this should be clarified by adding "amendment / removal" to the form.
177. Noting that the different types of amendment would likely include changes to the species list or number, removal of a site, or changes in geographic boundaries, Armenia suggested addition of a column to name the type of amendment.
178. Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States agreed to the proposed form.
179. The Meeting adopted the amendments to the *Form for Proposing or Amending Sites Listed in Table 3 of the Raptors MOU Action Plan* as presented in Annex I to the document with agreed amendments.

**Agenda Item 14.4. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.14.4](#). Reporting Formats for Signatories and Cooperating Partners**

180. The Coordinating Unit presented the document, which provided a more complete and systematic

process for future reporting. The proposed reporting formats aimed to ensure consistency and coherence with proposed updates and amendments and harmonisation with reporting under CMS, whilst taking account of the issue of reporting burdens. Reporting would be via an online submission system, whilst the primary point of contact would not need to be the only person contributing to the report.

181. In considering that the draft reporting formats worked well, Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States agreed to the proposed formats for reporting and encouraged the Coordinating Unit to develop final versions.
182. The UK supported the reporting formats presented and wished to adopt them.
183. Saudi Arabia sought clarification concerning which organisation should complete the reporting format for Signatories.
184. In support of Saudi Arabia, Chad noted that it was appropriate to address the report to the institution responsible for protected areas, not directly to the Ministry. Chad supported the format for Signatories itself, and could collect information from researchers, studies and relevant documents, but was concerned by its capacity to draft a report every three years, and wondered if the reporting period could be reviewed. The Coordinating Unit replied that every question in Annex 1 was addressed to the Signatory, whilst every question in Annex 2 was addressed to the Cooperating Partners organisations.
185. South Africa supported the reporting formats, which would enhance reporting submission by Cooperating Partners.
186. Morocco considered that reports submitted by Signatories were a good way to follow up, but questioned if it was possible to extend the reporting cycle, noting that for Signatories, the same institution was obliged to submit reports to various MEAs, presenting a significant burden. It would be beneficial to investigate streamlining reports between MEAs. The Coordinating Unit replied that efforts have been made in the formats to design questions analogous to those in the CMS context, to harmonise them as far as possible with CMS. However, there was a technical step in the alignment of forms for submission.
187. In reference to the reporting cycle, the Coordinating Unit noted that it was specified in the MOU Text that Signatories would be provided with documents and an overview of progress in implementation of the Action Plan prior to every MOS, for which national reports form a key component.
188. Concerning the reporting cycle, Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States recommended that a fixed timeframe should be agreed with clear deadlines that would make planning more predictable. Although other options were possible, reporting should be linked to every MOS.
189. BirdLife International noted that the format for reporting may present challenges for network-based organisations, and recommended inclusion of an annex for national responses. The Coordinating Unit considered that this should be possible.
190. Morocco supported to have reporting for every MOS, i.e. following a three-year cycle.
191. The Meeting reviewed the reporting formats proposed in Annexes 1 and 2 to the document and agreed to adopt them, with the amendments that take into consideration the amendments to Table 2 of Annex 3 of the MOU.

## Agenda Item 13. Conservation Initiatives under the Raptors MOU – Species & Threats

### Agenda Item 13.2. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.13.2](#). Conservation of African-Eurasian Vultures

192. Mr. André Botha (IUCN Vulture Specialist Group (VSG)) presented the document, which reported on the progress to implement the Vulture Multi-species Action Plan (Vulture MsAP) adopted by CMS Parties with Resolution 12.10 *Conservation of African-Eurasian Vultures*. The Coordinating Unit was requested to facilitate the continuation of the Vulture Working Group and its associated structures, and the Vulture MsAP saw an efficient timeline for its development, including regional workshops in Senegal, Spain and India.
193. The Vulture MsAP provided a strategic conservation plan covering the geographic range of all 15 species of migratory African-Eurasian vultures, and listed 12 objectives to address threats and a Framework of Actions that required collaboration between all stakeholders. It provided guidance on the monitoring, evaluation and review processes to follow during its 12-year implementation period, and outlined key components relating to communication and fundraising. The primary plan yielded three additional plans, for Egyptian Vulture, Cinereous Vulture and Asia's Critically endangered Gyps vultures.
194. Since its adoption in 2017, a questionnaire on completed and planned work was initiated, meetings held, and the plan's Strategic Implementation Strategy was published in 2020, although funding had not been secured to support its implementation. The Vulture MsAP was widely cited by peer-reviewed publications. A Mid-term Implementation Review was underway in 2023. Significant work has been carried out to address poisoning, including training in Europe, Africa and Asia, establishing databases and taking action in relation to NSAIDs and lead poisoning.
195. The draft West African Vulture Conservation Action Plan (WAVCAP) addressed six species, mainly threatened by belief-based use and trade. Mass poisoning for this end-use killed over 2,500 Hooded Vultures (*Necrosyrtes monachus*) in Guinea-Bissau in March 2020. The WAVCAP, which aimed to tackle poisoning in the subregion, contained a 2043 vision and addressed killing, trade and belief-based use of vultures.
196. Positive results included a turnaround in population trends of most vulture species in Europe, securing funds, stabilizations of some vulture populations of South Asia's vultures and the downlisting of Cape Vulture (*Gyps coprotheres*) in 2021 from Endangered to Vulnerable. However, there were still significant gaps in implementation, including the lack of a formal implementation framework and a critical need for resources.
197. The Meeting took note of the document, thanking the Vulture MsAP Coordination Team for its work carried out on a voluntary basis. Signatories, Cooperating Partners and other stakeholders were invited to support financially or with in-kind contributions the future work of the Vulture Coordination Team and the implementation of the Vulture MsAP. Signatories were also urged to participate in the Mid-Term Implementation Review of the Vulture MsAP. West African Signatories were invited to contribute to the development of the WAVCAP and its future implementation.
198. Mr Vladimir Dobrev (Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB)) presented the Egyptian Vulture New LIFE project, which addressed significant vulture decline in the Balkans and involved 22 partners in 14 countries. Key threats along the flyway included poisoning, electrocution and collisions, poaching and belief-based use. A Conservation Strategy was developed, and awareness events organised to build support. In Nigeria and Niger, tribal leaders agreed through the project to the use of plant-based alternatives to vulture parts, the sale of which in surveyed markets in Niger fell from 39 in 2019 to just one part found in 2022. The BSPB indicated that the

first signs of population stabilization might be occurring, but a 6% increase in survival was needed for the population to grow. The project required a long-term commitment and long-term funding.

199. Ms Jenny Weston (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) presented a Mid-Term Implementation Review of the Flyway Action Plan for the Conservation of the Balkan and Central Asian populations of Egyptian Vulture (EVFAP), a framework for action covering 33 countries. Implementation of the EVFAP had varied along the flyway, most positive in Range States covered by the New LIFE project. Improving surveillance and providing and enforcing legal protection status remained high priorities for the future, whilst mitigating NSAIDs needed close attention in Asia. The Egyptian Vulture was confirmed extinct as a breeding species in Serbia and Romania. Recommendations included more involvement of governments, ongoing monitoring in breeding areas and migration bottlenecks, raising awareness, and addressing illegal killing, especially shooting in Lebanon, and poisoning for belief-based use in West Africa.
200. Zimbabwe was encouraged by the signs of population stabilization of Egyptian Vultures in the Balkans, and questioned the trajectory for the future, noting the importance of capturing success stories. The BSPB confirmed that there were positive trajectories due to the project.
201. Morocco highlighted the need for the questionnaire to be available in French, and, noting gaps in implementation and funding of the Vulture MsAP, urged government agencies to be more involved in their implementation and in raising awareness among policy makers. The VSG replied that the questionnaire had been made available in French and Arabic.
202. Armenia wondered if poisoning by heavy metals had been considered for Egyptian Vulture, especially in relation to feeding at rubbish dumps. The VSG replied that the Vulture MsAP had an emphasis on lead, and welcomed feedback on this issue.
203. Saudi Arabia reported that there was much effort now in Saudi Arabia and the Middle East to mitigate electrocution and isolate dangerous powerlines.
204. Mr José Tavares (Vulture Conservation Foundation (VCF)) stated the importance of identifying the causes of death of vultures and all raptors, and for this information to contribute to databases on mortality. It seemed evident that poisoning (including lead), electrocution and collision were the most important causes of vulture deaths in Europe.
205. Noting that 10% of Egyptian Vultures in Israel, as well as Griffon Vultures (*Gyps fulvus*) and other raptor species carry tags, Israel considered that current levels of cooperation along the flyway were not adequate to detect all reasons of mortality.

**Agenda Item 13.3. [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.13.3](#). International Single Species Action Plan for Sooty Falcon**

206. The Coordinating Unit presented the document, noting that it had commissioned development of the draft ISSAP for Sooty Falcon in 2013 but financial resource constraints impeded its finalization. Resources were identified in 2022 to update the ISSAP resorting to a literature and database review, questionnaires summation and expert advice. The Coordinating Unit invited Range States to support the finalization of the ISSAP by reviewing the document that would be shared after the Meeting. The final ISSAP was anticipated to be available by the end of 2023, along with a factsheet and a library of information materials on the species.
207. Madagascar thanked the Coordinating Unit for the progress reported and was ready to support the ISSAP for Sooty Falcon.

208. Saudi Arabia supported the action requested.
209. The UAE informed the Meeting that despite installing nest boxes to facilitate successful breeding, it observed a continuous decline of Sooty Falcon, and advocated for knowledge exchange along the flyway, especially to identify causes of decline. The UAE urged the consideration of climate change impacts, and, in anticipation of close collaboration with others to ensure the survival of this species, supported the action requested.
210. The Meeting took note of the progress reported in the document. The Meeting also invited the Coordinating Unit to ask CMS COP14 to request its Scientific Council to review the ISSAP and formulate its recommendations, as appropriate for consideration by its Standing Committee.

**Agendas Item 13.4. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.13.4](#). Amur Falcon Conservation Initiative in Northeast India**

211. Mr Suresh Kumar (Wildlife Institute of India) presented the document, starting with praise for Mr Nick Williams, who was instrumental in instigating this conservation initiative in 2013. The project launched in Nagaland, where millions of Amur Falcons gathered at stopover sites, arriving in Northeast India every October/November. The initiative aimed to support conservation efforts, eradicate falcon harvesting and understand migratory routes through tagging, which generated much data and brought about attitude change of local people through visualisation. The Amur Falcon connected the Manchurian Steppes to Southern Africa, embracing 23 countries along the flyway, with congregations also in southern Somalia along their loop migration. Nagaland was a vital refuelling stop for the falcons, whose movements were timed to match emergence of flying termites, their principal prey. Amur Falcons faced significant trapping and hunting for human consumption in Nagaland, but since 2012 no repeat episodes of large-scale hunting had been recorded, and they had become a form of Naga pride, with some hunters as protectors.
212. India supplemented the report with information that the Amur Falcon had been elevated to the highest level of the wildlife protection act, whilst there were now over 200 community reserves, with the highest number in Nagaland thanks to the Amur Falcon.
213. Armenia commended the great research and conservation effort, with research showing how dependent Amur Falcon was on the emergence of specific insects, which could be linked to climatic factors and therefore be affected by climate change. As species with similar migration strategies could also be affected, Armenia recommended considering enlargement of the study.
214. The Coordinating Unit added that CMS would launch a report of the impact of climate change on migratory species; the Raptors MOU TAG would look into this with respect to raptors.
215. Saudi Arabia commended India for the inspiring achievements in Amur Falcon conservation, noting that it would be good to monitor this species in Africa.
216. Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States acknowledged the excellent work done on vultures, Saker Falcon and Amur Falcon, testimony to the importance of the MOU and its Action Plan, called for rapid finalisation of the Sooty Falcon ISSAP and encouraged other action plans to be developed.
217. The Meeting reviewed and commended the information reported by the Government of India in Annex 1 to the document, and noted suggestions for follow-up work and expansion of research, also embracing other species.

**Agenda Item 13.1. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.13.1](#). Report on Implementation of the Saker Falcon Global Action Plan (SakerGAP)**

218. Mr Colin Galbraith (Chair of the Saker Falcon Task Force (STF)) presented the document, congratulating all involved in its development. The plan had credibility through the Raptors MOU, CMS and governments and NGOs working together. The overall goal was to re-establish a healthy and self-sustaining wild Saker Falcon population throughout its range, and to ensure that any use was sustainable. The Saker Falcon had an extensive distribution and was of huge conservation and cultural significance across its range. It had suffered rapid declines driven by threats including electrocution and unsustainable trapping for falconry purposes, and its status depended on how people interacted with it into the future. SakerGAP had five initial flagship proposals: to create an online information portal, to engage 10 Falcon Hospitals and 10 trappers within a Saker Falcon Network, to deploy 100 satellite tags, to erect 1,000 artificial nest platforms in Central Asia and to install or retrofit 1,000,000 new or existing “bird-safe” electricity poles.
219. The current focus was the development of an Adaptive Management Framework for sustainable use, guided by key points, notably that Mongolia was the only Signatory where legal taking was permitted, and that a Quota Management System based on derived monitoring data could be feasible and create financial incentives to manager wild Saker Falcon populations sustainably. Collaboration was essential between breeding and non-breeding Range States. The framework needed to be evidence-based and take a precautionary approach, and any take traceable. Habitat conservation and management activities were key; sustainable use was not possible for small fragmented populations, and only potentially feasible for large, stable, increasing populations. The SakerGAP aimed to ensure that the impact of electrocution was significantly reduced; work had focused on looking to develop a map of dangerous powerlines and mitigation measures in priority areas. Electrocution was a persistent threat for which work with energy companies was needed.
220. Somalia questioned about potential conflict between people and falcons, especially in rural areas.
221. Kenya supported the draft Resolution being taken to CMS COP14 and encouraged the full development of the Adaptive Management Framework. Kenya asked if the role of captive breeding to help boost the population in Europe to a better threshold had been considered. The STF Chair replied that there was some captive breeding in some areas, but also assisted breeding in the wild, which had included the construction of nest platforms, as nest availability was a limiting factor. Installing nesting poles in natural breeding areas was likely to be more efficient than captive breeding, although this could also be a useful mechanism going forwards.
222. Saudi Arabia supported the action requested, and recommended mention in paragraph 9 of work supported by Gulf countries on reintroduction, as well as developing guidelines for reintroductions.
223. The UAE commended the work of the STF for conservation efforts for Saker Falcon, which is of high cultural value in the Middle East. In agreement with Saudi Arabia, the UAE was proud of their contributions to SakerGAP, including support for mitigating electrocution threats in Mongolia, noting a 98% mortality reduction, and reintroduction efforts. The UAE agreed with the action requested, and confirmed its commitment to SakerGAP, hopeful also of working with others to fill gaps. The STF Chair added that the UAE’s input was exemplary.
224. Zimbabwe commended the work achieved by the STF, and supported the proposal to submit the draft Resolution to CMS COP14. It was important to raise the plight of Saker Falcon in both breeding and non-breeding Range States and engage with the business community ahead of COP14, noting their increasing interest to join hands with nature agencies for region-specific interventions, especially with the energy and agricultural sectors and chemical industries. This could be achieved through awareness-raising workshops.



225. The UK highlighted building synergies with other work, such as through AEWA.
226. The Meeting took note of the key conservation and management issues reported in the document and supported the submission to COP14 of the draft Resolution outlined in section 7 of Annex 1. The Meeting also requested that the STF continue to fully develop the Adaptive Management Framework for Saker Falcon, and update the Global Action Plan, especially in light of the developing threat from electrocution.

## **Agenda Item 16. Financial and Administrative Matters**

### **Agenda Item 16.1. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.16.1](#). Current Financial Status and Future funding**

227. The Coordinating Unit presented the document. Since establishment in August 2009, the Raptors MOU Coordinating Unit had been generously funded via a Donor Agreement signed between EAD, on behalf of the Government of the UAE, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The Coordinating Unit shared premises and some staffing with the CMS Dugong MOU.
228. To facilitate the implementation of raptor conservation projects and activities, the Coordinating Unit negotiated 12 contracts via Small Scale Funding Agreements and recruited several temporary consultants with contracts.
229. The Coordinating Unit has been proactive in fundraising to support implementation of the MOU, with a range of proposals and requests developed.
230. MOS2 accepted the proposed scale of assessment for regular voluntary contributions based on the United Nations (UN) indicative scale aiming at raising US\$ 150,000 per annum. However, in line with other CMS instruments, the maximum contribution was capped at 20% of the overall budget, whilst the contribution of the EU had been fixed at 2.5%. Voluntary contributions were not requested from Signatories with an annual indicative contribution lower than US\$ 250. Voluntary contributions were received from seven European Range States during the reporting period; contributions remained well below the agreed fundraising target.
231. The Donor Agreement with the EAD, which covered Coordinating Unit staff costs and included resources to implement most of the unit's activities, was renewed for the periods 2016-2019 and 2020-2023. A new funding application had been submitted for the period 2024-2027, and the EAD has confirmed that they would continue to fund the CMS Office – Abu Dhabi for a further four years. It was anticipated that a significantly enhanced level of Signatories' contributions would be required in order to continue the status quo operation of the Coordinating Unit.
232. Since 2015, a number of new Signatories had joined the Raptors MOU, and an updated UN scale of assessment was available, whilst the cost of implementation and the range of activities had increased. The Coordinating Unit submitted three scenarios to the Meeting, each resulting in different average expected contributions from Signatories with a contribution over US\$ 250:
- Scenario 1: maintain fundraising target at US\$ 150,000 not considering inflations since 2015; this would result in a reduction in average contribution by US\$ 655;
  - Scenario 2: increase fundraising target to US\$ 168,000 due to more Signatories; this would result in no increase in average contribution;
  - Scenario 3: increase fundraising target to US\$ 175,000; this would result in an increase in average contribution by US\$ 230.

233. The Coordinating Unit urged Signatories to build voluntary contributions into their annual planning, and invited them to consider adopting one of the three scenarios presented.
234. The UAE thanked the Coordinating Unit for the report and looked forward to continuing its close collaboration. The UAE acknowledged the financial challenges highlighted and the need to assure stability and capacity for raptor conservation. The UAE encouraged that innovative finance mechanisms should be explored, emphasising the potential value of engaging with the private sector, increasing links with climate frameworks, and forging mutually beneficial partnerships to explore sustainable financial options for long-term viability. Financial challenges could be overcome through collective efforts.
235. BirdLife International considered that the Vulture MsAP provided an excellent summary of the key issues and of the actions needed to head off vulture extinctions, whilst the Egyptian Vulture work showed what could be achieved via a flyway approach. It urged all vulture Range States to act with urgency, including mobilising resources for the Vulture Working Group coordination.
236. Armenia expressed suggested improved “marketing” of the work to donors and potential supporters in order to increase obtaining grants and contracts for the Raptors MOU.
237. France thanked EAD for its generous offer of support, and underscored the importance of having a strategy to identify the obstacles that might act as barriers to voluntary contributions, and to diversity financing activities for implementation.
238. Saudi Arabia welcomed EAD’s generosity in supporting the Raptors MOU. Noting the future work needed to address major threats such as electrocution, Saudi Arabia opted for Scenario 3.
239. Morocco welcomed EAD’s generous offer to fund the Coordinating Unit from 2024-2027, but highlighted the need to explore other lasting financing solutions for future operation. Morocco worked on a state budget, which generally did not include voluntary contributions.
240. Sweden thanked the UAE for its very generous enabling support. Sweden supported Scenario 2 on the principle that it was still struggling to meet current ambitions.
241. Spain understood the urgent need for additional resources to undertake activities as well as core functions and supported Scenario 3.
242. The Netherlands thanked EAD for its continued support into the next period, and would welcome a strategic fundraising analysis. The Netherlands recognised the need to diversity funding, and increasing contributions was one of those actions, thus it supported Scenario 3.
243. Saudi Arabia noted that the issue raised by Morocco was important; many countries budgeted for Agreements, but might not have easy options to make voluntary contributions.
244. The CMS Secretariat offered to look into the issue of administrative obstacles for voluntary contributions, and encouraged Sweden to consider Scenario 3, as the Meeting needed to agree by consensus. Sweden offered to check with its Ministry, and after a break was successful in securing their agreements, so Sweden moved to support Scenario 3.
245. Egypt supported Scenario 3, and recommended investigating financial support from the renewable energy sector, especially windfarms.
246. Underlining the ambitions of the Raptors MOU, France supported Scenario 3, and recommended that CMS and the Coordinating Unit conduct work before MOS4 to identify obstacles in obtaining

financial contributions, especially linked to legal issues relating to voluntary contributions.

247. The Meeting welcomed the generous offer from EAD, on behalf of the Government of the UAE, to fund the work of the Coordinating Unit over the period 2024-2027 and took note of the information reported in the document. It urged Signatories to consider incorporating regular voluntary contributions into their annual financial planning mechanisms to ensure continuity of the operation of the Coordinating Unit and the implementation of workplans. The Meeting agreed to task CMS and the Coordinating Unit to investigate obstacles regarding voluntary annual contributions by Signatories and report back to MOS4.
248. The Meeting agreed to support Scenario 3 for a revised estimate of the voluntary assessed annual contributions by Signatories, as presented to the Meeting.

### **Agenda Item 15. Technical Advisory Group**

#### **Agenda Item 15.1. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.15.1](#). Terms of Reference of the Technical Advisory Group**

249. The Coordinating Unit presented the document. The TAG Terms of Reference (TOR) were first adopted at MOS1 in 2012. At TAG5, the Coordinating Unit proposed a revision of the TOR to improve clarity and readability, including restructuring, reformulation of titles to better organise information, improved clarity, eliminating repetition and some other editorial changes. TAG members agreed to these amendments and proposed an additional change to ensure that the BirdLife International nominated individual could serve for any number of terms. The final version of the TOR adopted by TAG5 was provided in Annex 1 of the document.
250. Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States took note of the revised TOR.
251. The Meeting took note of the revised TOR of the TAG, as presented in Annex 1 to the document.

#### **Agenda Item 15.2. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.15.2\(Rev.1\)](#). Renewal of the Technical Advisory Group**

252. The Coordinating Unit presented the document, describing results of the assessment exercise leading the panel to its recommendation on the composition of the TAG starting after MOS3. TAG membership comprised persons operating in their personal capacity, and qualified as specialists in raptor research, conservation and/or management. The TAG included members nominated by Signatories from the four main geopolitical regions covered by the MOU plus nominated experts and one person nominated by BirdLife International. TAG members served for a period of two regular MOSs or a third in exceptional cases.
253. There was an anticipated 93% membership change in the TAG composition at MOS3, with 15 places available. The Coordinating Unit invited Signatories and Cooperating Parties to submit nominations in June 2022, of which 20 were received, including nine reappointments justified on the concern for a loss of continuity of the TAG's work, and the value of expertise and network that reappointed members could offer. The TAG selection panel met twice online to assess candidates against the criteria provided in the TOR, which included networking capacity and recognised experience and expertise, as well as correcting a gender imbalance. The selection panel's recommendation for the renewed TAG was presented and the Meeting was invited to endorse.
254. The UK thanked the TAG for its high level of commitment and critical work. Welcoming the revised criteria including gender and supporting the need for continuity, the UK endorsed the renewed TAG.

255. South Africa endorsed the recommendations, and proposed capacity building measures to create continuity and to ensure gender balance in the future.
256. Chad thanked the TAG for its excellent work undertaken. It noted that proven experience might be limiting for some countries, and questioned the inclusion of North Africa with the Middle East, suggesting also a better definition of regions for Africa, so that it clarified which regions of Africa the African members represented.
257. Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States supported the new composition of the TAG for term 2023-2026, and endorsed the three representatives for Europe. They believed the TAG was very important for the Raptors MOU functioning and implementation, as was its qualified composition and regional representation, and they expressed their sincere gratitude to retiring members and welcomed new members.
258. The Coordinating Unit thanked the Meeting for all comments and noted that Africa had four representatives. No proposals for nominations had been received from West Africa this time.
259. The CMS Secretariat recommended that any new proposals could be raised on an intersessional basis, and encouraged the Africa region to discuss any issues relating to representation in time for the next MOS.
260. The Meeting endorsed the recommendation by the Selection Panel and appointed the members listed in document UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.15.2(Rev.1).

**Agenda Item 15.3. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.15.3](#). TAG Workplan 2023-2026**

261. Expressing thanks to all retiring members and to the UAE for supporting TAG meetings, Mr Des Thompson (Chair of the TAG) presented the document, which explained the sources of the different actions that the TAG Workplan brought together. He considered that the improving gender balance of the TAG was a positive development. The TAG Workplan 2023-2026 was guided by actions foreseen in the TAG Workplan 2016-2020, the TAG TOR and relevant Raptors MOU documents, as well as new activities proposed by TAG at TAG5. It comprised eight core activities, and other activities ranked by priority. The TAG needed early notification in relation to the review of sites in Table 3. The TAG's work in relation to climate change had increased significantly, within an overall ambitious work programme. The Chair of the TAG thanked Ms Vicky Jones (BirdLife International) for significant work undertaken to support the TAG.
262. The UK recognised and supported the ambitious Workplan and priority actions.
263. India appreciated the work carried out in developing this programme, and requested that actions on surveillance in relation to HPAI be integrated into the Workplan.
264. Chad expressed appreciation of the Workplan, and recommended inclusion of actions related to desertification with links to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the need to take capacity building into account.
265. Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States recognised the Workplan and supported it going forwards.
266. Saudi Arabia took note of the Workplan and accepted the recommendations, adding that TAG input would be welcomed to the development of an Action Plan for the Steppe Eagle.

267. The Netherlands wished the TAG success in executing its ambitious Workplan. Noting that under a goose management platform, mechanisms on bird safety with respect to collisions with aircraft were receiving attention, the Netherlands recommended that the TAG also look at this issue, which had high social and economic impact, and in which birds of prey were implicated.
268. Israel considered that poisoning was missing from the TAG Workplan, there being no proposed direct action in regard to monitoring and awareness in relation to poisoning.
269. The Chair of the TAG agreed that the TAG should look at HPAI and recognised that air safety was an important point; both could be considered under Action 16 dealing with causes of mortality. He agreed with the need to put a strong emphasis on climate change, and to put more resources into awareness raising, both nationally and regionally.
270. With respect to Action 28 on bottleneck monitoring, Kenya suggested that “to be determined (TBD)” should be added to the last column showing funding required. Kenya requested the advisory support of the TAG with respect to locust and quelea control, which impacted raptors in East Africa. Kenya also suggested that the TAG make use of existing platforms like eBird and local and regional atlases to share data on migration and local bird species.
271. Niger considered that capacity building was missing from the table of Actions. People living especially in rural areas of Africa needed to understand the importance of conserving raptors, and building capacity should be a priority, such as Training of Trainers. The Chair of the TAG thanked Niger and Chad for comments relating to capacity building and invited them to discuss this further.
272. The Chair and Saudi Arabia expressed their formal thanks to Mr Thompson for his professional approach to chairing the TAG over the past years, and for his immense contributions.
273. The Meeting took note of the TAG Workplan 2023-2026 contained in Annex 1 to the document, as previously approved by the TAG, and requested the Coordinating Unit to update the column “mandate” in the approved Workplan, to align with other outcomes adopted. The Meeting invited the TAG to identify suitable “leads” and “contributors” for implementing each Workplan action.

#### **Agenda Item 6. Review of Credentials**

274. The CMS Secretariat reported that South Africa, two staff members of the CMS Office - Abu Dhabi and the CMS Legal Officer had examined the credentials for the Raptors MOU MOS3. Out of 61 Signatories, 35 were present at the Meeting, and 31 credentials had been approved. The quorum required by the Rules of Procedure was therefore reached.
275. The Meeting approved the conclusions of the review of credentials.

#### **Agenda Item 13. Conservation Initiatives under the Raptors MOU – Species & Threats (continued)**

##### **Agenda Item 13.5. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.11](#). Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds: Initiatives in the Mediterranean (MIKT) and South West Asia**

276. Ms Claire Papazoglou (CMS Secretariat) presented the content relating to MIKT reported in the document. MIKT was established in 2014 and coordinated by the CMS Secretariat in collaboration with the Bern Convention. It had members in 21 countries with a Mediterranean coastline plus the European Commission, and Observers, including a network for environmental judges. There had been five MIKT meetings to date. The EU was recognized as a Champion Plus for its support in

funding the work of MIKT from 2018 to 2023, which was extended to 2028. The goal of the Rome Strategic Plan (the strategic framework for MIKT and the Bern Convention) was to reduce IKB by 50% by 2030, whilst its overarching objective was the development of National IKB Action Plans. Result-oriented objectives focused on understanding the extent, scale and scope of and the motivations for IKB, preventing IKB, ensuring that IKB was incorporated in national legislation, that effective and efficient enforcement of relevant legislation was undertaken, and ensuring justice for IKB-related offences. There was a self-assessment tool, the “Scoreboard to assess the progress in combating Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Wild Birds”, which facilitated reporting. MIKT had a comprehensive website with a depository of documents and information.

277. The UK found IKB scoring a useful exercise and commended MIKT for providing a suite of guidance relating to the scale of IKB.
278. Armenia emphasised the importance of socio-economic analyses, which could provide tools to address the roots of the problem but not the consequences.
279. BirdLife International suggested formalising the leadership role that the Vulture MsAP was playing in combatting poisoning, including its strong link with the VCF wildlife academy. Noting the high risk of NSAIDs to vultures in Africa-Eurasia, and the NSAID work done by the Raptors MOU, including developing guidance, it suggested that the Vulture Resolution at CMS COP14 take on responsibility for the text on NSAIDs that was adopted in the Poisoning Resolution at CMS COP13. In relation to IKB and other threats to raptors, it considered that the flyway approach was key to success, and all actors needed to upscale action and international cooperation. Noting imbalances in resources and capacity, it challenged each Signatory to consider taking actions in the next triennium to help others along the flyway to achieve more effective raptor conservation, through fundraising, bilateral financial support, sharing expertise, joint projects, exchanges and capacity building. Training webinars on aspects relating to IKB would be very useful, including on captive breeding. It proposed that the Coordinating Unit gather more information on the capacity and training needs of Signatories and consider organising further training opportunities including on IKB.
280. Saudi Arabia welcomed the report, and recommended that hunters be involved in action plans. The CMS Secretariat confirmed that hunters were full members in the development of national IKB Action Plans.
281. The Meeting took note of the contents relating to MIKT reported in the document.

**Agenda Item 13.6. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.11](#). CMS Energy Task Force (ETF)**

282. Mr Iván Ramírez (CMS Secretariat) presented the document, noting that the ETF had expanded its remit to include marine mammals. The ETF’s goal was to ensure that all energy sector developments were undertaken in such a way that negative impacts on migratory species were avoided. Observed impacts on migratory birds in relation to energy production included habitat loss and fragmentation, collision with infrastructure, electrocution, deviation of migratory routes and increased mortality. Nearly 60% of CMS Parties highlighted power lines / electrocution as a threat in their 2019 National Reports, and many were taking measures to counter renewable energy-related pressures to migratory species. The ETF had a joint programme of work with the UNFCCC, and planned further research on the impacts of solar and photovoltaic developments.
283. The MBZ Raptor Conservation Fund urged the Coordinating Unit to recognise electrocution and collision as being very different problems requiring different responses. There were areas of overlap, and some large birds were found under lower distribution power lines, whilst some

collisions caused birds to connect with both wires causing electrocution, but separating and distinguishing these threats and mitigating actions was important.

284. Commending the hard work done by the ETF, Saudi Arabia reminded the Meeting that H.E. Mariam Almheiri recommended to integrate raptors with the upcoming UNFCCC COP28. Saudi Arabia appreciated support received in helping to tackle threats to birds from the energy sector.
285. BirdLife International indicated that a rapid and just transition to clean energy was urgently needed, for which an ambitious global renewable target was essential. The continued significant loss of habitat and stored carbon required the world to take on board these issues in climate change decisions. It called on UNFCCC COP28 Parties and the UAE as COP28 President to ensure that transition to renewable energy took place in a nature-safe way to deliver positive outcomes for biodiversity, people and climate.
286. Noting that climate change was a key issue, Chad considered it essential to integrate wildlife with climate change mitigation, and to table a resolution on this issue through fora such as the Group of 77 and the Africa Group, and devise a strategy to highlight it.
287. The CMS Secretariat agreed that integration of migratory species conservation into climate change policies was needed, and CMS was willing to see how to best address this, for instance through joint events at both COPs. It was important to also address specific issues in Africa, including the absence of data and capacity building for monitoring.
288. The Meeting took note of the contents relating to the CMS ETF reported in the document.

**Agenda Item 13.7. Document [UNEP/CMS/Raptors/MOS3/Doc.13.7](#). Identifying Priorities for the Conservation and Management of Migratory Bird Habitats in Africa, Europe and Asia**

289. Sergey Dereliev (AEWA Secretariat) presented the document. AEWA, the Raptors MOU and AEMLAP were the principal partners of this project, which aimed to identify key habitats for migratory birds and priority areas for conservation, identify and quantify threats to priority habitats, analyse policy management tools, and develop Habitat Action Plans and facilitate their implementation. The project benefited all migratory birds in the African-Eurasian flyways, had clear objectives and deliverables, addressed a largely overlooked issue, had potential for a large-scale impact and provided the blueprint for a long-term implementation process. He considered it the most important unfunded bird conservation project at present in the African-Eurasian flyways. Noting that three instruments cooperated closely in this project, he urged Parties and Signatories of these instruments, including the Raptors MOU, to join resources and support it.
290. The Meeting took note of the contents of the document and encouraged Signatories, Range States, Cooperating Partners and others to collaborate to mobilise resources, including through voluntary financial contributions, to enable implementation of the key initiatives highlighted.

**Agenda Item 17. Adoption of outcomes**

291. The Coordinating Unit provided a summary of the Meeting outcomes, which gave the Coordinating Unit a clear mandate for the coming years.
292. The Meeting endorsed the outcomes.

**Agenda Item 18. Date and venue of MOS4**

293. The Coordinating Unit anticipated that MOS4 would be held in 2026, though no formal proposal

for hosting the Meeting had been received. If no proposals were forthcoming, the Coordinating Unit would circulate a call for invitations at least 18 months before MOS4.

### **Agenda Item 19. Any other business**

294. Ms Vera Voronova (Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan) informed relevant stakeholders about an Eagles of the Palearctic workshop being held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, 25-28 September 2023. The workshop aimed to summarise the status of threatened species such as Saker Falcon and Steppe Eagle and to highlight the threats of electrocution and collisions with energy infrastructure. It was important to raise the profile of the Steppe Eagle for conservation need, building on the success of the work on Egyptian Vultures.

### **Agenda Item 20. Closing of the Meeting**

295. Spain on behalf of the EU and its Member States thanked the UAE for hosting the Meeting, for the dinner, field trips and support provided, also EAD and the Coordinating Unit for all the work done in preparing documents and managing the Meeting. Special thanks were extended to the interpreters and support staff. Noting the good level of participation, they were pleased that the MOU was again on track, and looked forward to further cooperation.

296. Morocco congratulated the UAE and EAD for organising this important Meeting in an excellent way. The CMS and its agreements were vital for the conservation of raptors, and Signatories must cooperate for their sustainable management, which required a holistic approach to ecosystems, habitats, threats, awareness raising and cooperation measures.

297. The EAD expressed its gratitude to the UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MOCCA), noting its truly inspiring dedication to raptors, and further thanked all agencies, including the Houbara Conservation Fund. Noting that commitment is key to the success of this gathering, EAD encouraged a strong spirit of collaboration until the next Meeting.

298. The Executive Coordinator of the CMS Office – Abu Dhabi expressed heartfelt gratitude to all participants for their dedication, expertise and collaborative spirit in making this Meeting a success. She thanked the Government of the UAE, notably the MOCCA and the Dubai Municipality, noting their support in organising excursions. She remained deeply grateful to EAD for its unwavering support to CMS and the Raptors MOU. She expressed deep gratitude to the Chair, whose leadership and guidance had been instrumental in steering the Meeting. She extended sincere thanks to the dedicated CMS team in Abu Dhabi for its tireless effort in planning and managing this Meeting, also to the CMS team from Bonn. The dedication and skill of the talented translators was also greatly appreciated. She urged participants to carry the momentum forward to safeguard raptors and for the sustainable future of these majestic birds.

299. The Head of the Coordinating Unit thanked all Signatories and Cooperating Partners for their constructive participation in MOS3, which was the first MOS for many participants. He was very pleased with the outputs and achievements, creating the largest conservation network of sites for birds of prey across three continents. It was clear from the review of the MOU Text and its Annexes that the Raptors MOU had a clear mandate and an ambitious plan, which would require hard work and financial resources, quoting that “Conservation with no resources is conversation”.

300. The Chair thanked all MOS3 participants, whose time and great input had helped to make it a wonderful Meeting. He especially thanked the CMS and Raptors MOU teams in Abu Dhabi and Bonn for their phenomenal efforts in ensuring its success. The Chair declared the Meeting closed.