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|  | CONVENTION ONMIGRATORYSPECIES | UNEP/CMS/COP12/CRP7/Rev.126 October 2017 |

**CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN VULTURES**

(UNEP/CMS/COP12/Doc.24.1.4)

DRAFT RESOLUTION

*Affirming* the commitment to supporting implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all,

*Recognizing* the continuing loss of biodiversity, as established in Global Biodiversity Outlook 4 (2014), which provides a mid-term assessment of progress towards the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD),

*Affirming* the commitment to the implementation of the Aichi Targets adopted under CBD, inter alia the achievement of Target 12, within Strategic Goal C - To improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity,

*Concerned* that the 15 species of African-Eurasian Old World vulture (namely, Bearded Vulture *Gypaetus barbatus*, Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*, Red-headed Vulture *Sarcogyps calvus*, White-headed Vulture *Trigonoceps occipitalis*, Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*, Himalayan Griffon *Gyps himalayensis*, White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis*, White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus*, Indian Vulture *Gyps indicus*, Slender-billed Vulture *Gyps tenuirostris*, Cape Vulture *Gyps coprotheres*, Rüppell’s Vulture *Gyps rueppelli*, Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus*, Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus*, and Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotus*) are one of the most threatened groups of migratory birds in the world, with eleven being globally threatened, eight critically so, and three being Near Threatened according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List,

*Aware* that the precipitous population declines experienced in recent years by most African-Eurasian vulture populations have been driven by anthropogenic factors; primarily poisoning by poison baits set illegally: a) to protect livestock from predators but unintentionally kill vultures; b) by poachers, deliberately targeting vultures to prevent them drawing attention of wardens to illegally killed Elephant; and, c) for the deliberate collection of vultures for belief-based use; and by vultures feeding on carcasses contaminated with the veterinary drug, diclofenac, in South Asia; but also due to a range of other threats including: habitat loss or degradation, decreasing food availability, mortality caused by electrocution on powerline poles, collision with wind turbines and other energy generation and transmission infrastructure, human disturbance and fragmentation of remaining populations,

*Commending* countries such as Spain and France, which, through intensive and sustained conservation efforts, have secured the recovery of their national populations of vultures, and other countries that have already developed and are implementing national action plans for vultures,

*Recognizing* that vultures provide critically important ecosystem services, offering significant economic and health benefits by cleaning up carcasses and other organic waste in the environment; where there are no vultures, carcasses can take up to 3-4 times longer to decompose with significant consequences for the spread of diseases in both wild and domestic animals, as well as elevating pathogenic risks to humans; and *also recognizing* that vultures hold special intrinsic cultural value in many countries,

*Recalling* the ‘Programme of Work on Migratory Birds and Flyways 2014-2023’ included in CMS Resolution 11.14, and its Action 9 to “[…] promote the development, adoption and implementation of species action plans for priority species in line with CMS priorities for concerted and cooperative action, including: […] d) all African-Eurasian Vultures (except Palm-nut Vulture *(Gypohierax angolensis)*) via the CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey (Raptors MOU)” to be completed by COP12,

*Noting* CMS-led initiatives established by Resolution 11.15 – Preventing Poisoning of Migratory Birds, including the associated Working Group, Resolution 11.16 - The Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds, including the Inter-Governmental IKB Task Force, and Resolution 11.27 – Renewable Energy and Migratory Species, including the associated Energy Task Force,

*Acknowledging* the Resolutions of IUCN World Conservation Congress WCC-2016-Res-014 on combatting the illegal poisoning of wildlife, WCC-2016-Res-022 on conservation measures for vultures, including banning the use of veterinary diclofenac, and WCC-2016-Res-082 on a path forward to address concerns over the use of lead ammunition in hunting,

*Noting* that the Second Meeting of Signatories (MOS2) to the CMS Raptors MOU held in Norway in October 2015 formally recognized all Old World vultures (except the Palm-nut Vulture) as migratory species by listing them in Table 1 of Annex 3 of the Raptors MOU, and, furthermore tasked the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to support the Coordinating Unit in facilitating development of a Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures (Vulture MsAP), encompassing all 15 species that are obligatory scavengers,

*Noting* that four workshops were held between October 2016 and February 2017 to elaborate the regional components of the Vulture MsAP and an Overarching Workshop in February 2017 brought these components together into a comprehensive Vulture MsAP,

*Encouraging* the need for immediate action by Range State governments, partners, stakeholders and other interested parties, to address the principal threats to the 15 species of African-Eurasian vultures at all stages of their life cycle, and across all 128 countries of their ranges,

*The Conference of the Parties to the*

*Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals*

1. *Adopts* the 12-year Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures (Vulture MsAP) 2017-2029 [Annexed to this Resolution], and *urges* Parties and *encourages* non-Party Range States, partners and stakeholders to implement the Vulture MsAP as a matter of priority locally, nationally and regionally as well as at flyway level;
2. *Urges* Parties and *encourages* non-Party Range States, in implementing the Vulture MsAP, to urgently address: a) the problem of poisoning of vultures, particularly by poison baits, the veterinary use of diclofenac and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) toxic to vultures and the use of lead ammunition, in conjunction with the CMS Preventing Poisoning Working Group and in line with the Guidelines to Prevent Poisoning of Migratory Birds adopted by Resolution 11.15, ensuring that national conservation legislation is properly implemented and enforced; b) the impact of electrocution and collisions associated with energy infrastructure in conjunction with the CMS Energy Task Force in line with Resolution 11.27; and, c) the illegal killing, taking and trade in vultures and their body parts in line with Resolution 11.16;
3. *Urges* Parties and *encourages* non-Party Range States to implement existing measures under CMS, the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA), Raptors MOU, especially where these contribute to the objectives of the Vulture MsAP, in order to increase the resilience of African-Eurasian vultures and their potential to adapt to environmental change;
4. *Further urges* Parties, non-Party Range States and stakeholders and *invites* UN Environment and other relevant international organizations, bilateral and multilateral donors to work collaboratively to immediately begin to mobilize the considerable resources required to fully implement the Vulture MsAP;
5. *Requests* the Secretariat, through the Coordinating Unit of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU), to facilitate continuation of the Vulture Working Group and its associated structures (Vulture Steering Group and proposed Regional Implementation Committees) and team of coordinators, including by continuing to encourage engagement, communication, cooperation and collaboration between the stakeholders, by means of (regional) meetings and workshops, subject to the availability of funds;
6. *Invites* Parties and non-Party Range States to establish National Vulture Task Forces or equivalent bodies to develop National Vulture MsAPs to ensure the national implementation of the Vulture MsAP, integrating them into their (revised) National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) developed under CBD, especially to deliver Aichi Target 12 on preventing extinctions, and also achieve CMS objectives;
7. *Calls* on Parties and invites non-Party Range States to pursue programs of vulture reintroduction in potentially suitable ecosystems which were historically populated by these species, provided that such programs are conducted in accordance with the *“IUCN Guidelines for Reintroduction and other Conservation Translocations”*;
8. *Calls* on Parties and *invites* non-Party Range States and stakeholders, with the support of the Secretariat, to strengthen national and local capacity, including through twinning programmes between countries experienced in vulture conservation and those less so, following identification of training and capacity development needs, for the implementation of the Vulture MsAP;
9. *Calls* on Parties to report progress in implementing the Vulture MsAP, including monitoring the efficacy of measures taken, to each Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS, including through their National Reports.

DRAFT DECISIONS

***Directed to Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations***

12.AA Parties, non-Party Range States and stakeholders are encouraged to:

1. Develop partnerships with anti-poaching initiatives and conservation groups concerned with poisoning of other taxonomic groups, including developing training courses, translating and disseminating examples of best practice, sharing protocols and regulations, transferring technology, and promoting the use of online tools to address specific issues that are relevant to the Vulture MsAP.
2. Contribute, with the support of the Secretariat, to the proposed workshop hosted by CMS-United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), referred to in UNEP/CMS/COP12/Doc.24.1.2 Conservation of Migratory Landbirds in the African-Eurasian Region (especially in relation to sustainable land use in Africa), to ensure the needs of vultures are provided for in the development of a plan (to be proposed for adoption at CMS COP13 in 2020) on the integration of biodiversity requirements, as indicated by wild birds, into the land degradation neutrality delivery at national level with a focus on West Africa (countries of the Sahel and Guinea Savannah) and potentially also North-west Africa (countries of the Maghreb), subject to the availability of resources.

***Directed to the Scientific Council***

12.BB The Scientific Council is authorised to:

1. Liaise with the Vulture Working Group and the IUCN Vulture Specialist Group, via the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU, to address key gaps in knowledge as highlighted within the Vulture MsAP, subject to the availability of resources.

***Directed to the Secretariat***

12.CC The Secretariat shall:

1. Convey this Resolution to the secretariats of other multilateral environmental fora, in particular UN Environment, CBD, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), seeking their support, contributions, cooperation and collaboration in the implementation of the Vulture MsAP, subject to the availability of resources;

12.DD The Secretariat through the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors MOU, shall:

1. Report to the next Meeting of Signatories of the CMS Raptors MOU and subsequent meetings of the Sessional Committee of the CMS Scientific Council.