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CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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IMPROVING WAYS OF ADDRESSING CONNECTIVITY IN THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES

Adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 12th Meeting (Manila, October 2017)

Recalling Article III.4 of the Convention under which Parties shall endeavour to conserve and, where feasible and appropriate, restore the habitats of Appendix I species which are of importance in removing the species from danger of extinction and to prevent, remove, compensate for or minimize, as appropriate, obstacles that seriously impede the migration of the species, and Article V.5 under which Agreements in respect of Appendix II species should provide for maintenance of a network of suitable habitats "appropriately disposed in relation to the migration routes",

Also recalling Article I.1 of the Convention under which "range" is defined for the purposes of the Convention as all the areas of land or water that a migratory species inhabits, stays in temporarily, crosses or overflies at any time on its normal migration route,

Noting that the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023 emphasizes that the conservation of migratory species at the population level demands the application of a migration systems approach, involving conservation strategies that give holistic attention to populations, species and habitats as well as the entire span of migration routes and the functioning of the migration process,

Further noting that the Strategic Plan emphasizes that the multi-dimensional connectedness of migratory species gives them a special role as ecological keystone species and indicators of the linkages between ecosystems and of ecological change, while also exposing these species to special vulnerabilities,

Noting in particular Target 9 of the Strategic Plan which concerns the application of a migration systems approach in cooperative activities between States, and Target 10 which concerns the adoption of a functional basis for area-based conservation measures,

Acknowledging that since its entry into force in 1983 the Convention on Migratory Species has provided the primary specialized intergovernmental framework for cooperative efforts on issues of connectivity in this context, and that the implementation of relevant provisions under the Convention forms a key contribution to the achievement of objectives adopted in other intergovernmental fora including Goals 14 and 15 in "Transforming our World", the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Aichi Targets 11 and 12 in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024,

Recalling Resolution 10.3[1] on the role of ecological networks in the conservation of migratory species and Resolution 10.19[2] on climate change, both of which highlight the critical importance of connectivity for conservation and management of migratory species, and in the case of Resolution 10.3 encourages Parties to enhance connectivity of protected areas and to make explicit the relationship between areas of importance for migratory species and other areas which may be ecologically linked to them; to select areas for conservation in such a way as to address the needs of migratory species throughout their life cycles and migratory ranges; and to set network-scale objectives for the conservation of migratory species relating for example to restoration of fragmented habitats and removal of barriers to migration on land and at sea,

Recalling Resolution 11.25[3] on advancing ecological networks to address the needs of migratory species, which expresses deep concern at the increasing fragmentation of habitats for migratory species and urges Parties to promote connectivity *inter alia* through the development of site networks that are appropriately defined, coordinated and managed, and other measures which cater for the entire migratory range and migratory lifecycle requirements of the animals concerned, giving consideration to ways in which connectivity can contribute to the elimination of obstacles to migration, including disturbance, habitat fragmentation and discontinuities in habitat quality as well as more obvious physical obstacles, while also taking care to assess any risks of potential unwanted consequences of increased connectivity,

Recognizing the important role played by existing ecological networks worldwide in the conservation of migratory species particularly through the role of these networks in supporting connectivity, including the networks reviewed for COP11 in document UNEP/CMS/COP11/Doc.23.4.1.2 as well as those operated at national level,

Acknowledging the relevance of the Critical Site Network Tool developed initially for waterbird populations in the African-Eurasian flyway under the aegis of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) and led by Wetlands International and BirdLife International with the support of the Government of Germany, and its recent redevelopment as an open-access web portal providing a strong basis for identifying ecological networks and emphasizing their connectivity aspects, while also providing insights into climate change vulnerability and informing conservation decision-making at site, national and international levels'

Welcoming the report of the expert meetings on connectivity, convened in Italy in 2015 and 2017, provided to the present meeting in document UNEP/CMS/COP12/Inf.20,

Having regard to the report of the Scientific Council,

The Conference of the Parties to the
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

1. *Urges* Parties and *invites* others to give special attention to the issues highlighted in this Resolution when planning, implementing and evaluating actions designed to support the conservation and management of migratory species, both at national level and in the context of international cooperation, including in particular when:

   (i) devising strategic conservation objectives, so that these may more often be expressed in terms of whole migration systems, and in terms of the requirements for the functioning of the migration process itself, as opposed to merely the status of populations or habitats;

1 Now consolidated as Resolution 12.7
2 Now consolidated as Resolution 12.21
3 Now consolidated as Resolution 12.7

(ii) identifying, prioritizing, developing and managing protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, both within and beyond areas of national jurisdiction, taking account *inter alia* of the need for connectivity to be a key factor in the definition of appropriate conservation management units, including at the landscape or seascape scale, and the need for actions to be addressed to the connections between places as well as to the places themselves;

(iii) strengthening and expanding ecological networks to conserve migratory species worldwide and enhancing their design and functionality in accordance with Resolutions 10.3 and 11.25;

(iv) evaluating the sufficiency and coherence of ecological networks in functional and qualitative terms as well as in terms of extent and distribution, having regard to Resolution 11.25 and to the desirability of sharing experiences and best practices on this issue;

(v) monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of the protection and management of the areas and networks referred to in the present paragraph;

2. *Encourages* Parties and *invites* others, working with all relevant stakeholders in government authorities, local communities, the private and other sectors, to intensify efforts to address threats to the conservation status of migratory species which are manifested as threats to connectivity, including barriers to migration, fragmented resources and disrupted processes, genetic isolation, population non-viability, altered behaviour patterns, shifts in range caused by climate change or depletion of food or water resources, inconsistencies in management across and beyond national jurisdictions, and other factors;

3. *Requests* the Secretariat to facilitate the sharing of information on connectivity within and between the instruments of the CMS Family, biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements and others including bringing this Resolution to the attention of the process under the auspices of the Convention on Biological Diversity for identifying and describing Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas, the process under the auspices of the United Nations General Assembly to develop an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, the United Nations Environment Programme Global Connectivity Conservation Project and the IUCN WCPA Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group, and to take cognizance of serial nominations of World Heritage Sites under the World Heritage Convention within a multinational flyway context;

4. *Invites* Parties, other States and relevant organizations to provide support for the long-term maintenance of large-scale databases on migratory species distributions, movements and abundance such as the European Union for Bird Ringing (EURING), Movebank, the International Waterbird Census, BirdLife International's Seabird Tracking Database, the World Database on Key Biodiversity Areas and the UNESCO-IOC Ocean Biogeographic Information System;

5. *Further invites* Parties, other States and relevant organizations to provide support for the enhancement of the databases referred to in the preceding paragraph in order to address in more targeted ways a range of connectivity questions of relevance to CMS implementation as well as to engage in targeted joint analyses of animal movements and other factors using these databases in an integrated way across the marine and terrestrial realms so as to improve understanding of the biological basis of migratory species connectivity; and

6. *Urges Parties* and *invites* others to foster the development of radio receiver systems that could be deployed worldwide to detect movements of small animals on land and at sea.