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MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

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Agenda Item 28

CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN VULTURES

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

This document reports on progress to implement Resolution 12.10 *Conservation of African-Eurasian Vultures* and Decisions 13.50-13.53. It recommends the adoption of proposed amendments to Resolution 12.10 and new draft Decisions, and the deletion of Decisions 13.50-53.

Rev.1 makes consistent the language in Decisions.

CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN VULTURES

Background

1. The Conference of the Parties, at its 12th meeting (2017), adopted Resolution 12.10 *Conservation of African-Eurasian Vultures*, along with the Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures (Vulture MsAP), urging Parties and encouraging non-Party Range States, partners and stakeholders to implement the plan as a matter of priority. In addition, it requested the Secretariat to facilitate the continuation of the Vulture Working Group, subject to the availability of funds.
2. At its 13th meeting (2020), the Conference of the Parties (COP13) adopted Decisions 13.50-13.53 on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Vultures:

13.50 Decision directed to Parties, IGOs & NGOs

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

- a) *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 Multispecies Action Plan;*
- b) *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 on the 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 the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties) 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.*

13.51 Decision directed to the Scientific Council

The Scientific Council is authorized to liaise with the Vulture Working Group and the IUCN Vulture Specialist Group, via the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors Memorandum of Understanding to address key gaps in knowledge as highlighted within the Vulture Multispecies Action Plan, subject to the availability of resources.

13.52 Decision directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall convey this Decision to the secretariats of other multilateral environmental fora, in particular the United Nations Environment Programme, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), seeking their support, contributions, cooperation and collaboration in the implementation of the Vulture Multispecies Action Plan, subject to the availability of resources.

13.53 Decision directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat, through the Coordinating Unit of the Raptors Memorandum of Understanding, shall report to the next Meeting of Signatories of the CMS Raptors Memorandum of Understanding and subsequent meetings of the Sessional Committee of the CMS Scientific Council.

3. This document provides a summary of the implementation of the Vulture MsAP, as mandated in Decision 13.53, based on information gathered through the Vulture MsAP Vulture Coordination Group and national reports from Signatories and Cooperating Partners to the Raptors MOU.

Implementation of the Vulture Multi-species Action Plan

4. The [Vulture MsAP](#) covers the geographic ranges of all 15 species of migratory African-Eurasian vultures. It sets out 12 objectives, with a framework of actions encompassing 124 activities, to promote actions to save these species. The plan also contains information on, or links to, existing plans: the [Flyway Action Plan for the Conservation of the Balkan and Central Asian Populations of the Egyptian Vulture](#) (Annex 4 to the Vulture MsAP) and the [Flyway Action Plan for the Conservation of the Cinereous Vulture](#) (Annex 5 to the Vulture MsAP). A [Blueprint for the Recovery of South Asia's Critically Endangered Gyps Vultures](#) is also included as Annex 6 to the Vulture MsAP.
5. Since COP13, three organizations have agreed to support the implementation of the Vulture MsAP through a Coordination Team (VCT) facilitated by the Secretariat. The composition of the VCT is as follows:
 - André Botha (Endangered Wildlife Trust), Acting Overarching Coordinator;
 - Jovan Andevski (Vulture Conservation Foundation – VCF), Acting Coordinator for Europe and Central Asia;
 - Mohammed Shobrak, Acting Regional Coordinator for the Middle East;
 - Chris Bowden (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds), Acting Regional Coordinator for the rest of Asia;
 - Roger Safford (BirdLife International);
 - José Tavares (VCF); and
 - Nicola Crockford (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds).
6. The VCT meets regularly to share information, review funding opportunities and devise plans for promoting the Vulture MsAP at meetings and forums. These activities ensure that the Vulture MsAP maintains its relevance and influence among the conservation community. The team contributes to Objective 12, which aims to advance vulture conservation through effective promotion and implementation of the Vulture MsAP.
7. The 'Global Summit for the Flyways' (Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, April 2018), organized by BirdLife International, reaffirmed the urgency of implementing the Vulture MsAP, with designated roles for governments, conservationists, protected area managers, livestock breeders, hunters and veterinarians. The summit emphasized the importance of coordinating species action plans in general, and for the Vulture MsAP in particular, given the large number of species, threats and Range States that it covers.
8. At the European Vulture Conference (1-4 October 2019, Albufeira, Portugal), organized by the Vulture Conservation Foundation (VCF), the VCT, in partnership with the Secretariat, led a plenary session to promote the implementation of the Vulture MsAP. The session presented an overview of the plan and progress to date, along with short reports from the four acting Coordinators. The session was supported by the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi ([EAD](#)), under the Migratory Species Champion Programme.

9. As of 2 May 2023, the Vulture MsAP has been accessed 3,437 times and cited in 91 published peer-reviewed articles on vultures and their conservation, with a Research Interest Score of 66.0 according to the online tracking service ResearchGate. Furthermore, at the 15th Pan African Ornithological Congress (21-25 November 2022, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe), the symposium, 'CMS Vulture Multispecies Action Plan: implementation in sub-Saharan Africa – an assessment of progress', highlighted the importance of the Vulture MsAP in guiding conservation and research efforts.
10. The Vulture MsAP is used in the assessment of vulture-related proposals submitted for funding under the LIFE Programme, the EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action. This has helped to fund priority actions highlighted in the plan, contributing to its implementation and the conservation of vultures globally.
11. The [Vulture MsAP Strategic Implementation Plan](#) was published in February 2020, with financial support from the Federal Office for the Environment of the Government of Switzerland. The plan includes an inventory of activities to date, as reported through stakeholder surveys and consultations over the previous two years. The document also provides a road map of concrete priorities for delivering the agreed framework, including information on 11 flagship projects and relevant cooperation opportunities, generating added impetus for mobilizing resources and support.
12. The Secretariat tasked the VCT with carrying out the Mid-term Review of the Vulture MsAP, with funding from EAD, as envisaged in the plan itself. The review was launched in early 2023 and a questionnaire has been circulated to all Range States, including Raptors MOU Signatories and Cooperating Partners, CMS Parties, and other vulture experts. Further consultation will take place at the European Vulture Conference (Cáceres, Spain) in November 2023, with the final report expected in the first quarter of 2024. The Mid-term Review will provide a detailed overview of the implementation of the Vulture MsAP to date and assess progress towards the delivery of the 12 objectives set out in the plan. Ultimately, it will help to strengthen the effectiveness and impact of the Vulture MsAP in conserving and protecting vultures globally.
13. Objective 1 of the plan aims to significantly reduce the mortality of vultures caused unintentionally by toxic substances used (often illegally) in the control and hunting of vertebrates. To this end, the work carried out thus far in Europe and Africa includes:
 - Engaging with local communities;
 - Establishing anti-poisoning police canine units;
 - Building the capacity of investigation officers to prevent poisoning, identify and respond to poisoning accidents and investigate them efficiently;
 - Training on wildlife poisoning response for over 7,000 learners from a range of stakeholder groups in 17 countries in Africa; and
 - Establishing regional and national databases to collect information on poisoning events such as the African Wildlife Poisoning Database and the Balkan Wildlife Poisoning Database, as well as national databases in Italy and Hungary.
14. Through the ongoing BalkanDetox LIFE project in seven Balkan countries, the following activities have been implemented to date:
 - Staff members of enforcement and conservation agencies have been trained to effectively identify and investigate wildlife crime;
 - National working groups to fight against the use of poison baits have been created;

- National road maps to tackle poisoning have been developed;
 - Improvements to national legislation have been proposed; and
 - A Wildlife Crime Academy has been established, where enforcement agents, toxicologists and vets are trained in wildlife crime forensic techniques by Spanish peers.
15. Objective 2 of the plan aims to recognize and minimize the mortality of vultures by non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), which caused the collapse of South Asian vulture populations. Significant results have been achieved in South and South-West Asia, mostly under the coordination of the Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction (SAVE) consortium, including:
- Banning diclofenac in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Iran, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan and the Socotra Archipelago; bans are currently being discussed in a few more Range States;
 - Testing the toxicity for vultures of several NSAIDs; and
 - Proving that meloxicam and tolfenamic acid are vulture-safe and effective anti-inflammatory drugs.
16. During the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (2020), members of the VCT led two side events. The first event, 'Vultures are still dying from poisoning, but the Vulture MsAP is working', aimed to reiterate the priorities of the Vulture MsAP and review progress in the fight against the use of poison baits and sentinel poisoning of vultures. The second event, 'Veterinary drugs and the Vulture MsAP: A call for wider action', highlighted the growing threat of NSAIDs to vulture populations and encouraged prompt implementation of Vulture MsAP actions.
17. In 2022, a working group on NSAIDs was set up by the Technical Advisory Group of the Raptors MOU. The working group has developed a questionnaire on the use and licensing status of veterinary NSAIDs, which has been sent to Raptors MOU Signatories and Range States. Using the information gathered through the questionnaire, a fact sheet on NSAIDs and their impact on vultures and other scavenging raptors has been produced, alongside a dedicated [webpage](#). The goal is to raise awareness and encourage action to protect vultures from the harmful effects of vulture-toxic NSAIDs.
18. Objective 3 of the plan aims to fully implement the phasing out of lead ammunition by hunters, as set out in Resolution 11.15. To this end, the Secretariat has:
- Cooperated with the Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) to support an ad hoc CMS Expert Group. (Further details are provided in UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.28.3 *Preventing Poisoning of Migratory Birds*); and
 - Participated in a workshop on the phasing out of lead in Southern Africa, held in Johannesburg in late January 2023, during which a regional strategy to phase out the use of lead ammunition and fishing weights was discussed.
19. Objective 4 of the plan aims to reduce and, eventually, halt the trade in vulture parts for belief-based use. Significant progress has been made in delivering on this objective, notably in Guinea-Bissau:
- In February 2020, the worst ever recorded mass poisoning of vultures occurred in Guinea-Bissau, resulting in the killing of over 2,000 globally threatened Hooded

- Vultures (*Necrosyrtes monachus*), driven by the demand for vulture parts for belief-based use;
- The CMS Secretariat Avian team, with the help of the VCF, the FAO office in West Africa and veterinary authorities in Guinea-Bissau, sent a letter to the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Guinea-Bissau, offering support;
 - The CMS Secretariat Avian team, the VCF, the IUCN Species Survival Commission Vulture Specialist Group and BirdLife International worked together to develop and implement a training workshop for relevant authorities in Guinea-Bissau. The workshop, which took place in May 2022, focused on improving the preparedness of institutions in Guinea-Bissau to respond to and prevent further wildlife poisoning incidents;
 - The workshop also developed a list of Vulture Conservation Actions for Guinea-Bissau; and
 - In late 2022, partly as a result of these efforts, a man was sentenced to four years and two months in prison for poisoning and killing 50 Hooded Vultures. This was the first conviction for an environmental crime in Guinea-Bissau and the first prison sentence in Africa for poisoning vultures. It sets a strong precedent for future cases.
20. The EU LIFE funding instrument has proven very effective in co-funding vulture conservation, with activities implemented well beyond the EU's borders. With funds from EAD, the CMS Secretariat supported a LIFE project entitled Urgent Actions to Strengthen the Balkan Population of the Egyptian Vulture and Secure Its Flyway. The project – which involved 20 partners from 14 countries on three continents – has been recognized as one of the most ambitious ventures in the history of vulture conservation. As a result, the eastern-most European Egyptian Vulture population has stabilized after decades of decline. The species was downlisted to 'Vulnerable' in the 2020 European assessment (BirdLife International 2020).¹ Under the framework of the LIFE project, a review of the Egyptian Vulture Flyway Action Plan (Annex 4 to the Vulture MsAP) was carried out.
21. Several other LIFE projects, including the LIFE Egyptian Vulture project (Italy), BalkanDetox LIFE, LIFE GypConnect and LIFE Rupis, have tackled priority threats and developed conservation actions that have benefited populations across their European range. For example, the Egyptian Vulture has colonized Sardinia following actions developed by LIFE Safe for Vultures.

Implementation of Decision 13.52

22. At the 18th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES COP18, 2019), Decisions (18.186-18.192) were adopted to help understand the threats posed by the harvesting of West African vultures and the legal and illegal trade in vulture parts, and to identify actions to stop declines and allow population recovery. Decision 18.190 called for the Animals Committee to establish a working group on West African vultures to provide relevant recommendations. These CITES decisions offered the opportunity to increase cooperation between the two Secretariats, as instructed by CMS Decision 13.52.
23. In response to those decisions, and to facilitate the Working Group on West African vultures, the CMS and CITES Secretariats commissioned UNEP–WCMC to undertake a review of the trade in and sentinel poisoning of West African vultures, focusing on the

¹ BirdLife International. 2021. *Neophron percnopterus* (Europe assessment). *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2021: e.T22695180A166295484. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2021-3.RLTS.T22695180A166295484.en>. Accessed on 27 May 2023.

six key species: Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), White-headed Vulture (*Trigonoceps occipitalis*), Hooded Vulture (*Necrosyrtes monachus*), White-backed Vulture (*Gyps africanus*), Rüppell's Vulture (*Gyps rueppelli*) and Lappet-faced Vulture (*Torgos tracheliotos*). The report highlighted key gaps in knowledge related to the trade in vultures and their body parts and made recommendations for the Animals Committee to consider.

24. The CMS Secretariat contributed to the 31st CITES Meeting of the Animals Committee (2021), proposed draft decisions for the 74th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee (2022) and provided support for their approval at CITES COP19 (2022), in line with the Vulture MsAP and the outcomes of the CITES West African vultures process.
25. To support the regional implementation of the Vulture MsAP, the IUCN SSC Vulture Specialist Group began engaging with its membership in West Africa to draft a specific multi-stakeholder strategy to combat and reduce the impact of belief-based use on the remaining vulture populations in West Africa. The CMS Secretariat engaged the IUCN Conservation Planning Specialist Group to assist with this process. With funding from EAD, the Secretariat supported a three-day workshop in Abuja, Nigeria in October 2022 that brought together CMS National Focal Points, CITES National Authorities and other government representatives, as well as academics and non-governmental organizations from Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. A final draft of the West Africa Action Plan is expected in late 2023. The Action Plan also builds on recent conservation initiatives in Nigeria and Niger that have helped to reduce, in some key areas, the number of stalls selling vulture parts (by up to 80-90 per cent).

Discussion and analysis

26. Significant progress has been made in regions that received funding from governmental and intergovernmental sources, like the EU LIFE financial instrument. However, in other regions, the successful execution of the Vulture MsAP relies on enhancing coordination capacity, for which no resources have been allocated. Therefore, it is essential to secure sufficient financial resources to: a) support coordination and fundraising efforts, and b) facilitate the implementation of the Vulture MsAP. Moreover, it is crucial to raise awareness and garner support for the plan throughout all areas covered by the Vulture MsAP. This objective can be achieved by establishing an effective coordination structure.
27. Some cases of vulture mortality are caused by the highly pathogenic H5N1 strain of Avian influenza. This disease could pose a substantial risk to vulture populations that are already under pressure from other threats. Proper monitoring of the prevalence of the disease in wild and domestic avian populations and timely actions to reduce the likelihood of transmission between domestic and wild migratory birds is key to addressing this threat.
28. The following proposals for amendments to Resolution 12.10 are made:
 - Update some of the references to strategic frameworks and global initiatives, such as, inter alia, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework;
 - Include reference to the Egyptian Vulture New EU LIFE Project, and the Mid-term Implementation Reviews of the Egyptian Vulture Flyway Action Plan and the Vulture MsAP;
 - Include reference to the discovery of vulture-safe alternatives to diclofenac and to the countries that have banned it; and

- Include a call for parties and other stakeholders to monitor the presence and impact of avian influenza in domestic and migratory wild birds, and to take timely and effective actions.
29. New decisions are proposed to guide the Parties and other stakeholders in implementing the Vulture MsAP and in addressing, in cooperation with CITES, the threat to vultures in West Africa posed by the belief-based use of vulture body parts.

Recommended actions

30. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to:
- a) adopt the draft amendments to Resolution12.10 contained in Annex 1 of this document;
 - b) adopt the draft Decisions contained in Annex 2 of this document; and
 - c) delete Decisions 13.50-13.53.

ANNEX 1

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO RESOLUTION 12.10

CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN VULTURES

NB: Proposed new text to the Resolution is underlined. Text to be deleted is ~~crossed-out~~.

Affirming the commitment to support 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 by the 2019 Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the Global Biodiversity Outlook 4 (2014) 5 (2020);

Affirming the commitment to the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted under the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2022, and in particular Target 4 aimed at halting extinction of threatened species and Target 5 aimed at ensuring that the use, harvesting and trade of wild species is sustainable, safe and legal, ~~thin Strategic Goal C - To improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity,~~

Concerned that the 15 species of African-Eurasian vultures (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 mortality caused by poison baits set illegally: a) to protect livestock or game species from predators but which unintentionally kill vultures, b) by poachers, deliberately targeting vultures to prevent them drawing the attention of wardens to illegally killed Elephant or Rhinoceros, 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~~ a number of Vulture Range States, including several member states of the EU and several countries in South Asia and Africa, Spain and France, which, through intensive and sustained conservation efforts, have secured the recovery of their national populations of vultures, or halted the collapse of their vulture populations, as well as 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; and that where there are no vultures, carcasses can take up to 4 times longer to decompose with the release of significant amounts of CO₂ and 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 Palmnut 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 (Rev.COP13)² *Preventing Poisoning of Migratory Birds*, including the associated Working Group; Resolution 11.16 (Rev.COP13)³ *The Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds*, including the Inter-Governmental IKB Task Force; and Resolution 11.27 (Rev.COP13)⁴ *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,~~

Welcoming the Mid-term Implementation Review of the Egyptian Vulture Flyway Action Plan,

Welcoming the ban imposed on some of the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Iran, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan and in part of Yemen, and *noting* the new research that has identified alternatives to the most dangerous NSAIDs such as meloxicam and tolfenamic acid,

Congratulating the Range States and organizations involved in successfully halting the decline of the Egyptian Vulture population breeding in the Balkans, through flyway-level actions addressing threats in the breeding areas, along migration routes and in the wintering grounds,

² The Resolution was amended by COP13

³ The Resolution was amended at COP13

⁴ The Resolution was amended at COP13

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, 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 the flyway level;
2. *Urges* Parties and *encourages* non-Party Range States, in implementing the Vulture MsAP, taking into consideration the reviewed priorities resulting from the Mid-term Implementation Reviews of the Egyptian Vulture Flyway Action Plan, to urgently address: a) the 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 (Rev.COP13) Preventing poisoning of migratory birds, 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 (Rev.COP13) Renewable energy and migratory species; and c) the illegal killing, taking and trade in vultures and their body parts in line with Resolution 11.16 (Rev.COP13) The prevention of illegal killing, taking and trade of migratory birds;
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), the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (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* United Nations Environment Programme 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 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 Kunming-Montreal Aichi Target 42 4 on preventing human-induced

extinctions and Target 5 on preventing overexploitation and reducing the risk of pathogen spillover, and to achieve CMS objectives;

7. *Calls on Parties and invites non-Party Range States to pursue programmes of vulture reintroduction in potentially suitable ecosystems that were historically populated by these species, provided that such programmes 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;*
8. *bis Calls on Parties and invites non-Party Range States and stakeholders to be aware of the possible risk to vulture populations from the highly pathogenic H5N1 strain of Avian Influenza and urges the Parties to take the necessary steps to prevent or combat this disease where it could have an impact on vultures.*
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.*

ANNEX 2

DRAFT DECISIONS

CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN VULTURES

Directed to Parties, Non-Party Range States, IGOs & NGOs

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

- a) 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 Multispecies Action Plan;
- b) actively engage with the Energy Task force and the Intergovernmental Task Force on Phasing Out the Use of Lead Ammunition and Lead Fishing Weights;
- c) participate in the ongoing development of the Mid-term Review of the Vulture Multi-species Action Plan and take the findings into consideration while implementing the Action Plan;
- d) support the upcoming Mid-term Review of the Cinereous Vulture Flyway Action Plan;
- e) ensure the national implementation of the Vulture MsAP integrates the findings of the Mid-term Reviews into their (revised) National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).

Directed to Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

14.BB Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to provide the Secretariat with information on the activities carried out towards the implementation of the Vulture MsAP in time for the Secretariat to report at the 15th Conference of the Parties.

Directed to West African Parties and Range States (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo)

14.CC The West African Range States for White-backed vulture (*Gyps africanus*), Griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*), Rüppell's vulture (*Gyps rueppelli*), Hooded vulture (*Necrosyrtes monachus*), Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), Lappet-faced vulture (*Torgos tracheliotos*), and White-headed vulture (*Trionoceps occipitalis*) are urged to:

- a) ensure that national laws to protect vultures – in particular, all vulture species listed in Appendix I – are effectively enforced by sufficiently trained and equipped

police forces, and ensure that penalties for non-compliance are effectively administered and sufficient to deter illegal activities;

- b) work with relevant experts and organizations and stakeholders for identifying and implementing demand reduction strategies for vultures and their parts and derivatives including for belief-based use and consumption and, where appropriate, expand the implementation of strategies that have been successful;
- c) work with relevant organizations to initiate wide-scale public awareness campaigns at regional, national and local levels about the impacts of belief-based use of body parts of vultures, including the importance of these species to ecology and human health, and existing national and international legislation that protects vultures;
- d) provide information to the CMS Secretariat on the implementation of this Decision to assist it in reporting to the 15th meeting of the COP.

Directed to West African Range States and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

14.DD The West African Range States and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to:

- a) support the finalizations and implementation of the West African Vulture Conservation Action Plan 2023-2043 and collaborate in the conservation and restoration of West African vultures;
- b) gather and exchange scientific knowledge and expertise on West African vultures, with a particular focus on: i) documenting the scale of vulture internal trade by surveying markets and identifying national trade routes; ii) characterizing links between poisoning and trade in vultures, and contributing to the African Wildlife Poison Database; and iii) updating the conservation and population status information of West African vultures, and White-backed Vultures (*Gyps africanus*), Rüppell's Vultures (*Gyps rueppellii*) and Lappet-faced Vultures (*Torgos tracheliotus*) in particular.

Directed to the Standing Committee

14. EE Requests the Standing Committee to adopt the West African Vultures Action Plan, if provided to the Standing Committee at its 55th meeting.

Directed to the Scientific Council

14. FF Requests the Scientific Council to consider the West African Vultures Action Plan, if provided to the Scientific Council at the 7th meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council and recommend it to the Standing Committee for adoption.

Directed to the Secretariat

- 14.GG The Secretariat shall convey these Decisions to the secretariats of other multilateral environmental fora, in particular the United Nations Environment Programme, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICCWC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), seeking their support, contributions, cooperation and collaboration in the implementation of the Vulture Multispecies Action Plan, subject to the availability of resources.
- 14.HH The Secretariat shall:
- a) liaise with the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade on Endangered Species (CITES) to assist in the implementation of the trade-related aspects of the Multi-species Action Plan to Conserve African-Eurasian Vultures (Vulture MsAP) 2017-2029, building on ongoing initiatives such as the West Africa Strategy on Combatting Wildlife Crime (WASCWC) and subject to external funding;
 - b) subject to external funding, support the implementation of capacity-building activities aimed at providing support to the West African Range States in implementing the Vulture MsAP;
 - c) in collaboration with the CITES Secretariat, consider available conservation status information from the whole geographic range of the vulture species concerned for inclusion in the CITES Secretariat reporting to the Animals and Standing Committees;
 - d) subject to external funding, support the implementation of capacity-building activities aimed at providing support to the range States in implementing the Vulture MsAP.
- 14.II The Secretariat shall report on the implementation of these Decisions to the next Meeting of Signatories of the CMS Raptors Memorandum of Understanding and CMS COP15.