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Agenda Item 28.2

**ACTION PLAN FOR MIGRATORY LANDBIRDS IN THE AFRICAN-EURASIAN REGION
(AEMLAP)**

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

This document reports on progress to implement Resolution 11.17 (Rev.COP13) *Action Plan for Migratory Landbirds in the African-Eurasian Region (AEMLAP)* and related Decisions 13.34 to 13.38. It includes proposed draft amendments to the Resolution and draft Decisions.

ACTION PLAN FOR MIGRATORY LANDBIRDS IN THE AFRICAN-EURASIAN REGION (AEMLAP)

Background

1. The African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Action Plan (AEMLAP) is aimed at improving the conservation status of migratory landbird species in the African-Eurasian region through international coordination of action for these species, and by catalysing action at the national level.
2. The Conference of the Parties, at its 13th meeting (COP13, 2020), updated Resolution 11.17 (Rev.COP13) *Action Plan for Migratory Landbirds in the African-Eurasian Region (AEMLAP)*, through which the Action Plan and its Annexes were adopted. This Resolution instructs the Secretariat, in collaboration with Parties and relevant international organizations, and subject to the availability of funds, to organize regional workshops, promote the implementation of the Action Plan, and share best practice and lessons learned for the effective conservation of migratory landbirds.
3. Furthermore, the Conference of the Parties requested the African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Working Group (AEML WG) and the Scientific Council, in liaison with the Migrant Landbird Study Group (MLSG) and the Friends of the Landbirds Action Plan (FLAP), and with the support of the Secretariat, to support the implementation of Action Plans for the European Roller (*Coracias garrulus*) and the European Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*). It also requested these groups and bodies to continue to develop Action Plans for declining migratory buntings, including the Yellow-breasted Bunting (*Emberiza aureola*); see Document [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.28.5.1 Action Plans for Birds](#).
4. COP13 also adopted Decisions 13.34 to 13.38 *Action Plan for Migratory Land Birds in the African-Eurasian Region (AEMLAP)*, which read as follows:

13.34 Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall:

- a) *subject to the availability of funds, organize in the intersessional period between the 13th and 14th meetings of the Conference of the Parties a consultation meeting of Range States to agree on whether the Action Plan should remain as a stand-alone document or whether a new CMS instrument should be developed, or an existing CMS instrument should be used as institutional framework;*
- b) *in the intersessional period between the 13th and 14th meetings of the Conference of the Parties, promote the importance of sustainable land use for migratory birds, and the specific practices and approaches in the Abuja Declaration, with relevant UN agencies and other international institutions and to seek opportunities for collaborative action to encourage sustainable land use for migratory species and people.*

13.35 Directed to the Scientific Council

The Scientific Council is requested, subject to the availability of resources to:

- a) *continue the Working Group on African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds until the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP14), extending its membership to incorporate expertise from geographical regions currently absent, to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the Action Plan, and to develop indicators to assess the implementation of the Programme of Work 2016 – 2020;*
- b) *in the intersessional period between the 13th and the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and subject to the availability of resources, work with the Migratory Landbird Study Group, relevant academic institutions, research-funders and the Working Group, in order to actively promote*

research that addresses key knowledge gaps relating to migratory landbird conservation in African landscapes, *inter alia*, to:

- i. identify migratory pathways and strategies (including multi-species analysis) using tracking technologies to better understand movement patterns, geographic areas of particular importance to multiple landbird species and migratory connectivity so enabling field research, monitoring and conservation action to be targeted more effectively;
 - ii. undertake detailed field studies in sub-Saharan Africa and at staging sites, in conjunction with existing data where appropriate, to better understand species distribution patterns, habitat use and foraging ecology, and in particular identify and enhance conservation of the stop-over sites immediately to the north and south of the Sahara (including through data collection and seeking linkages with relevant stakeholders);
 - iii. synthesize data from European breeding grounds to explore spatial and temporal patterns in demographic parameters in relation to migratory pathways and large-scale patterns of environmental change;
 - iv. use satellite image Earth observation data and where possible in conjunction with on the ground habitat and bird monitoring (including through synergies with and expansion of common bird monitoring schemes) to improve understanding where land cover is changing and how this impacts African-Eurasian migrant birds, and research the drivers of land use / land cover change;
 - v. seek better understanding of how to influence the economic and social policy drivers causing land use / land cover change at different scales; and
 - vi. encourage research to determine for which declining European landbird migrants declines cannot be explained by conditions in the breeding grounds; and
- c) consider the viability of the Working Group and its Steering Group in the absence of sufficient funds required for the implementation and coordination of the Working Group's Programme of Work, as outlined in Decision 13.36 (b), and to propose an alternative mechanism for the implementation of these activities, as needed.

13.36 Directed to Parties

Parties:

- a) are urged to make voluntary financial contributions to ensure the coordination of the activities needed for the implementation of the AEMLAP and the Working Group's Programme of Work, and for the organization of at least one meeting of the Working Group, during the intersessional period between the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP13) and COP14;
- b) are further urged to take note of the request of the Working Group regarding the requirement of an estimated €200,000 for the implementation of the Working Group's Programme of Work and an AEMLAP Coordinator for the intersessional period between COP13 and COP14, on the understanding that in the absence of a substantial proportion of the total amount (at least €100,000 by 30 June 2020, and an additional minimum of €50,000 each by 28 February 2021 and 28 February 2022), the Working Group could become dormant;
- c) are invited, with the support of the Secretariat, to work together with relevant United Nations agencies, international organizations and other stakeholders, to organize a workshop on the integration of biodiversity requirements into the land degradation neutrality delivery at appropriate scale;
- d) particularly those that are Parties, Signatories or Range States, respectively, also to other CMS instruments – 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) and the Central Asian Flyway Action Plan – are requested to provide financial support as soon as possible for the timely implementation of the joint project on the assessment of the status of and the development of action plans for priority principal bird habitats along the African-Eurasian flyways;
- e) are requested to report on progress in implementing the AEMLAP and integrating it into delivery against other relevant international agreements, including monitoring and efficacy of measures taken, to COP14 in 2023, via their National Reports, in order to achieve CMS objectives.

13.38 Directed to Working Groups & Task Forces

Subject to the availability of resources as outlined in Decision 13.36 (b), the Working Group, with support from the Scientific Council and the Secretariat, should update its Programme of Work by the end of 2020, including an associated budget to capture the existing financial requirements and conservation priorities and in line with the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015 – 2023.

Activities to implement Resolution 11.17 (Rev.COP13) and Decisions 13.34 to 13.38

5. During this intersessional period, the CMS Secretariat has actively cooperated with CMS Parties and stakeholders to improve the AEMLAP Programme of Work and its impact on the conservation status of the species covered by this Action Plan.
6. To support the implementation of Decision 13.35 (a), the Secretariat supported the AEML WG to continue its work, issuing a call in 2023 requesting all AEMLAP Range States to revalidate and extend AEML WG membership throughout the AEMLAP range, and updated the membership list accordingly.
7. A Coordination Unit for the AEML WG was established at the Swiss Ornithological Institute (SOI – Vogelwarte Sempach) in 2022 through a small-scale funding agreement, contributing to the implementation of Decision 13.36 (b).
8. To support the implementation of Decision 13.38, the Secretariat conducted a survey to assess the status of the implementation of the AEML WG Programme of Work (POW) 2016-2020. The main limitations for implementation were identified as: lack of funding for coordination and implementation of the POW and for on-the-ground work and monitoring, the COVID-19 pandemic, lack of expertise and capacity, and political instability in some key areas. Based on the survey, the preparation of an updated version of the [AEML WG POW for the years 2021-2026](#) was coordinated by the AEML Steering Group (SG), supported by the SOI and approved via electronic correspondence by the AEML WG in November 2022, thereby completing Decision 13.38.
9. Members of the AEML SG promoted the AEMLAP at various congresses, such as the Pan-African Ornithological Congress (Uganda, November 2022) and the 4th Meeting of the Range States of the Central Asian Flyway (India, May 2023) to promote synergies between both processes.
10. Members of the AEML WG, and the Secretariat also supported a project run by the Cambridge Conservation Initiative, [Integrating science, policy and sustainable development to address African-Eurasian migrant landbird declines: African perspectives on a flyway-wide issue](#), which started in 2020.
11. The AEML WG continued its support (carried over from its previous POW) for the AfriBiRds project. Through this project, a [monitoring toolbox](#) was developed to train people in the field on monitoring landbirds. Further resources and information can be accessed online through the [NABU AfriBiRds website](#).
12. The [African Bird Atlas Project \(ABAP\)](#), a citizen-science bird-monitoring programme that relies on a robust, repeatable protocol (BirdMap) and allows insights into the distributions of African birds and their conservation, was the subject of a round-table session titled *African Bird Atlas Project (ABAP) – European Ornithology’s greatest need* at a symposium of the European Bird Census Council (EBCC, Luzern, Switzerland, April 2022). Switzerland provided support towards this meeting of EBCC and ABAP.
13. The [Eurasian African Bird Migration Atlas](#) project was undertaken by a large international team coordinated by the European Union for Bird Ringing (EURING), which included members of the AEML WG. Movements in time and space of 300 bird species are mapped and analysed,

drawing on data gathered by [European Ringing Schemes](#) over more than a century and collated by the [EURING databank](#). It was funded by the Government of Italy.

14. The Secretariat organized and supported annual AEML SG meetings to drive the update of the WG POW and to support the sharing of information among the members for relevant matters and updates. The Secretariat also held regular meetings with the Coordination Unit at the SOI.
15. The Secretariat revised the AEMLAP website in 2020 and 2023 and made available the new WG POW and other relevant materials.
16. The SOI developed a logo that, while not officially affiliated to the AEMLAP as a CMS instrument, can be used to brand any products or presentations linked to African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds to help raise awareness. The logo is available upon request from the Secretariat and the SOI.

Single-species Action Plans developed in conjunction with AEMLAP

17. A progress report on activities relating to the Yellow-breasted Bunting (*Emberiza aureola*), the European Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*) and the European Roller (*Coracias garrulus*) is included in Document [UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.28.5.1 Action Plans for Birds](#).

Challenges in the implementation of AEMLAP and the AEML WG POW

18. Although the Steering Group for the AEML WG is very active, the activity and responsiveness of the wider WG membership is limited, despite multiple messages from the Secretariat and the Chair. Another challenge is the fact that its membership is limited to only 58 of the 129 Range States to AEMLAP. Little feedback was received from the WG on the survey on implementation of the AEML WG POW 2016-2020 or on the draft AEML WG POW 2021-2026, and few responses to the Secretariat's call for new or continuing members were received.
19. Funding from the Government of Switzerland was received in 2020 to establish the Coordination Unit of the AEML WG. The Government of Germany also contributed to supporting AEMLAP by assigning a Junior Professional Officer (JPO), partially to provide support to AEMLAP. In 2022, the Government of Norway also contributed to extending the JPO contract.

Discussion and analysis

20. Decision 13.34 (a) has been carried over repeatedly, but its implementation has not been possible as no funds were available to organize a Range States meeting. It remains unclear whether any other CMS institutional framework could be used to coordinate action at the international level to conserve, restore and sustainably manage populations of migratory landbird species and their habitats. Over recent triennia, there have been no particular initiatives by or requests from Range States, the WG or stakeholders to drive forward the discussion on a new institutional framework. Moreover, considering the current efforts to develop a new framework for the Central Asian Flyway (CAF), approaches seeking synergies among the existing tools and instruments rather than additional overlap of new separate institutional frameworks for AEMLAP and CAF may be advisable. Therefore, the deletion of Decision 13.34 (a) is proposed.
21. The AEML WG has put forward a proposal to include the term *habitat* in paragraph (a) of draft Decision 14.BB, to request Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to engage actively in the implementation of the AEML WG POW; and to add paragraph (d) in Decision 14.BB (previously 13.37). The insertion of *habitat* in (a) is a way of making explicit the continuing need for nature conservation, not only for the restoration work that is being

undertaken. The addition of paragraph (d) calls for activities that move beyond the planting of trees, to consider the complexity of landscapes and the use of native plant species.

22. The proposed Decisions call for Parties to support concrete collaborative action among relevant UN agencies, in particular a renewed proposal for a workshop on the integration of biodiversity requirements into land degradation neutrality delivery (Decision 14.DD b)).
23. Furthermore, the proposed Decisions highlight the need for technological awareness, further advancing the use of modern technologies such as satellite imaging, and making active use of existing programmes such as the above-mentioned bird atlas tools, for prioritizing and implementing actions for species and habitats across the AEMLAP range.

Recommended actions

24. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to:
 - a) adopt the draft amendments to Resolution 11.17 (Rev.COP13) as contained in Annex 1 of this document;
 - b) adopt the draft Decisions as contained in Annex 2 of this document;
 - c) delete Decisions 13.34 to 13.38.

ANNEX 1

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO RESOLUTION 11.17 (Rev.COP13)

**ACTION PLAN FOR MIGRATORY LANDBIRDS
IN THE AFRICAN-EURASIAN REGION (AEMPLAP)**

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

Concerned that there is compelling scientific evidence of widespread declines of African-Eurasian migratory landbirds in recent decades, and that these declines are of growing conservation concern in both scientific and political arenas as the European breeding populations of some formerly widespread species have more than halved in the last 30 years,

Aware that the status of migratory landbirds is widely used as an indicator of the overall health of the environment and other biodiversity, *inter alia* the achievement of Target 12 of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and when monitored with standardized methods migratory landbirds can provide an effective indicator of sustainable land use,

Aware also that the key drivers of this decline appear to be degradation of the breeding habitats, particularly within agricultural systems and woodland and forests, and in the non-breeding areas the combined factors of anthropogenic habitat degradation, unsustainable harvest and climate change,

Concerned that current trends in African land use, alongside those in Eurasia, are leading to considerable landscape changes that can have significant negative impacts on biodiversity, including migratory birds; this problem needs to be addressed because such biodiversity is valuable both in its own right and for the ecosystem services it provides; and that these services constitute the foundation of resilient livelihoods for rural people, who are some of the poorest in the region,

~~*Noting* that the African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Working Group ('the Working Group'), at its second meeting in Abidjan, from 25 to 27 November 2015, agreed on a Programme of Work, as endorsed by the 1st Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council on 18-21 April 2016, where land use change was given top priority,~~

Noting that an updated Programme of Work for 2021-2026 for the Working Group was coordinated by the AEML Steering Group and the Secretariat, supported by the Swiss Ornithological Institute (SOI) as the Coordination Unit, and approved by the Working Group in November 2022,

Welcoming the report of the workshop on *Sustainable Land Use in West Africa: National and International Policy Responses that Deliver for Migratory Birds and People (LUMB)* ('the workshop') that was held in Abuja, from 24 to 26 November 2016 and the *Abuja Declaration on Sustainable Land Use for People and Biodiversity including Migratory Birds in West Africa*,

Further welcoming the completion of the BirdLife International and Naturschutzbund Deutschland project: *African Biosphere Reserves as Pilot Sites for Monitoring and Conservation of Migratory Birds (AfriBiRds)*, funded by Germany, and the potential of the project to contribute to the development of national wild birds' indices and generation of information on migratory birds in general, as well as the BirdLife partnership project *Living on the Edge*,

Further welcoming the work of BirdLife International partners funded by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to set up and operate national Common Bird Monitoring projects (derived from and compatible with the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme established in 2002 and supported by the European Union and RSPB) in Uganda and Botswana using local volunteer citizen scientists, that have successfully been able to produce scientifically robust wild bird indicators and additional environmental information for their nations,

Recalling the relevance of sustainable land use for CMS and its Strategic Plan 2015 – 2023, and for other CMS Family instruments such as the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) and its Strategic Plan 2019 - 2027, and the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU),

Acknowledging the critical role that land plays both in driving and storing as well as sequestering greenhouse gas emissions, identified in the report *Climate Change and Land: an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems*, prepared by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and consequently the importance of transitioning towards sustainable land use systems in order to realize the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Paris Agreement,

Acknowledging the importance of sustainable land use for implementing a wide range of international agreements relevant to migratory landbirds including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the ~~Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011—2020~~Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement, the Ramsar Convention and its Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024 and the United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification (UNCCD) and its Strategic Framework 2018 - 2030,

Acknowledging the African Union Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT), the Strategic Objective 2 of the FAO Revised Strategic Framework, the Ministerial Declaration on Food Security and the agricultural sectors in a changing climate made at the 29th FAO Regional Conference for Africa, on 8 April 2016, the recommendations of the participants of the FAO Regional Meeting on Agroecology in Sub-Saharan Africa, on 6 November 2015, Resolution 2/24 of the United Nations Environment Assembly, and the United Nations Environment Programme and its *Poverty and Environment Initiative* (PEI), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and its Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021,

Acknowledging also the *West African Regional Agricultural Investment Programme* (ECOWAP 25), the *Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Convergence Plan for the Sustainable Management and Utilization of Forest Ecosystems*, Nationally Determined Contributions under the UNFCCC and the African Union Agenda 2063 to support sustainable management practices and approaches that will support birds and people in West Africa,

Noting that land use change is a key driver of continuing loss of biodiversity across Africa, and that the drivers of land use change and the solutions that can achieve sustainable land use identified at the workshop are applicable to conservation in many landscapes across Africa and beyond,

Recalling that Resolution 10.27¹ of the Tenth Conference of the Parties urged Parties and invited non-Parties and other stakeholders with the CMS Secretariat to develop an Action Plan for the conservation of African-Eurasian migrant landbirds and their habitats throughout the flyway, which was adopted at the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties, on the basis of which the COP can consider the need for a new instrument or using an existing instrument as a framework,

Further recalling Resolution 11.16 (Rev.COP13~~2~~) *The Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds*², and the Guidelines to Prevent Poisoning of Migratory Birds adopted through Resolution 11.15 (Rev.COP13~~2~~) *Preventing Poisoning of Migratory Birds*³,

Taking note of the report of the workshop to elaborate an Action Plan on African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds, that took place in Accra between 31 August and 2 September 2012,

¹ Superseded by Resolution 11.17 (Rev.COP13~~12~~) *Action Plan for Migratory Land Birds in the African–Eurasian Region (AEMLAP)* The resolution was repealed and consolidated into Resolution 11.17, which was amended at COP12 and COP13.

² and subsequent revisions of this Resolution

³ and subsequent revisions of this Resolution

~~Acknowledging~~ with thanks the contributions of the members of the ~~Working Group on African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds (the Working Group)~~ and its coordination by BirdLife International established under the CMS Scientific Council and its coordination by BirdLife International from 2015 to 2017,

Further acknowledging with thanks the coordination of the Working Group by the Swiss Ornithological Institute (SOI – Vogelwarte Sempach) from 2022.

Welcoming the establishment of the Migrant Landbirds Study Group (MLSG) as an international network of specialists and organizations working on research, monitoring and conservation of migratory landbird species,

Taking note of the results of its inaugural Meeting in Wilhelmshaven, Germany, 26-28 March 2014 and of the Friends of the Landbirds Action Plan (FLAP) as a forum for interested stakeholders, individuals and organizations to follow and support the CMS Action Plan and migrant landbird conservation in general, and subsequent successful development and operationalization of FLAP by BirdLife International as an online networking platform,

~~Further welcoming~~ the initiative of EURING (European Union for Bird Ringing) and the Scientific Council to produce a the publication of the *Eurasian African Bird Migration European Atlas of Bird Migration*, based on recoveries of ringed birds and tracking studies by the European Union for Bird Ringing (EURING), with the support of the CMS Secretariat and the Italian Government,

Taking note of the conclusion of the Cambridge Conservation Initiative workshop, 12-13 March 2019, on *Science and Policy to Address Threats to the Afro-Palaeartic Migratory Birds: new research and future policy* that for many declining African-Eurasian landbirds the single most beneficial 'generic action' in the non-breeding grounds is likely to be retaining and enhancing tree cover in the landscape, specifically through measures in the wider landscape beyond traditional forest protection, and that international approaches to retain and enhance tree cover such as the Bonn Challenge, Trillion Trees and the Great Green Wall and local aid and development initiatives around agriculture and forestry provide potential experiments to determine, through careful monitoring, both what works in habitat creation (enabling comparison of biodiversity between sites and across years) and socioeconomic benefits for local communities, so as to provide insights on beneficial interventions,

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

1. *Adopts* the *African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Action Plan (AEMLAP)* (the Action Plan), and its Annexes, contained in the Annex to this Resolution and *urges* Parties and *encourages* non-Parties and stakeholders to implement the Action Plan as a matter of priority, especially in line with the ~~AEMLAP Programme of Work 2016-2020~~ Working Group's Programme of Work 2021-2026;
2. *Urges* Parties and *encourages* non-Parties to address the issue of habitat loss and degradation of migratory landbird species through the development of policies that maintain, manage and restore natural and semi-natural habitats within the wider environment, including working with local communities, and in partnership with the poverty alleviation community and the agriculture and forestry sectors in Africa;
3. *Urges* Parties and *encourages* non-Parties to work together with agencies, organizations and local communities to address harmful land use changes in the African-Eurasian flyway region, notably West Africa in the first instance, by promoting sustainable land use through practices and approaches set out in the CMS workshop of November 2016 (*Abuja Declaration*);

4. *Calls on* Parties and non-Parties to recognize and support joint action by relevant Conventions and international processes on sustainable land use of benefit to migratory birds that can deliver CMS objectives, especially in respect to Article II.1 and the Strategic Plan 2015-2023 and to assist delivery the Sustainable Development Goals;
5. *Requests* Parties and *invites* Range States to implement existing measures under CMS, AEWA, the Raptors MOU and other relevant international environmental treaties, especially where these contribute to the objectives of the Landbirds Action Plan, in order to increase the resilience of migratory landbird populations and their potential to adapt to environmental change;
6. *Calls on* Parties to continue to urgently address the problems of illegal and of unsustainable taking of landbirds during migration and wintering and ensure that national conservation legislation is in place and enforced and implementation measures are taken, and *requests* the Secretariat to continue to liaise with the Bern Convention and other relevant fora in order to facilitate the national and international mitigation of the problem of illegal killing of birds in line with Resolution 11.16 (Rev.COP4213) *The Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds*⁴;
7. *Urges* Parties and *invites* non-Parties to implement the *Guidelines to Prevent Poisoning of Migratory Birds* as adopted through Resolution 11.15 (Rev.COP4213) *Preventing Poisoning of Migratory Birds*; in particular those referring to agricultural pesticides which have a special significance for migratory landbirds as a major source of mortality;
8. *Requests* the Scientific Council ~~and~~ to work with the Working Group, in liaison with the MLSG, relevant academic institutions and research-funders, subject to the availability of resources, in particular through the analysis of existing long-term and large-scale datasets, such as atlas initiatives including, but not limited to, the European Atlas of Bird Migration, the African Bird Atlas Project (ABAP) and the Eurasian African Bird Migration Atlas, and on the use of new and emerging tracking technologies, field studies of migrant birds in Africa and Asia, use of survey and demographic data from the Eurasian breeding grounds and use of remote sensing earth observation data of land cover change in Africa and Asia, to promote work to address key gaps in knowledge and future research directions to actively promote research that addresses key knowledge gaps relating to migratory landbird conservation in Eurasian African landscapes, inter alia, to:
 - a) identify migratory pathways and strategies (including multi-species analysis) using tracking technologies to better understand movement patterns, geographic areas of particular importance to multiple landbird species and migratory connectivity so enabling field research, monitoring and conservation action to be targeted more effectively;
 - b) undertake detailed field studies in sub-Saharan Africa and at staging sites, in conjunction with existing data where appropriate, to better understand species distribution patterns, habitat use and foraging ecology, and in particular identify and enhance conservation of the stop-over sites immediately to the north and south of the Sahara (including through data collection and seeking linkages with relevant stakeholders);
 - c) synthesize data from Eurasian breeding grounds to explore spatial and temporal patterns in demographic parameters in relation to migratory pathways and large-scale patterns of environmental change;
 - d) use satellite image Earth observation data and, where possible, in conjunction with ground habitat and bird monitoring (including through synergies with and expansion of common bird monitoring schemes) to improve understanding of where land cover is changing and how this impacts African-Eurasian migrant birds, and research the drivers of land use/land cover change;

⁴ and subsequent revisions of this Resolution

- e) seek better understanding of how to influence the economic and social policy drivers causing land use/land cover change at different scales; and
- f) encourage research to determine for which declining Eurasian migrant landbird populations declines cannot be explained by conditions in the breeding grounds.
9. *Further requests* the Scientific Council and the Working Group, in liaison with FLAP, to promote and encourage increased public awareness of, and support for, migratory landbird conservation along the flyway among the general public and stakeholders, including about how individual birds are shared across countries and act as indicators of the overall health of the environment, of people and all biodiversity;
10. *Instructs* the Secretariat, in collaboration with Parties and relevant international organizations, subject to the availability of funds, to organize regional workshops to address specific issues and promote the implementation of the Action Plan and share best practice and lessons learnt in the effective conservation of migratory landbirds;
11. *Calls on Parties and invites* non-Parties and stakeholders, with the support of the Secretariat, to strengthen national and local capacity for the implementation of the Action Plan including, *inter alia*, by developing partnerships with the constituencies dealing with poverty alleviation, land degradation neutrality and nature-based climate change solutions and 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 Action Plan;
12. *Encourages* Parties and non-Parties to maintain or develop, as necessary, national common bird monitoring schemes with a view to the establishment of national wild bird indices as indicators of sustainable land use and ecosystem health for example, in the context of development of a 'Landbird Monitoring Programme for the East Atlantic Flyway', building on the experiences gained from the successful operation of Common Bird Monitoring projects in Africa and the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme in Europe, involving the establishment of a set of terrestrial bird monitoring sites across several countries, which can eventually form the basis of a global wild bird indicator that can be utilized by the different MEAs and international processes that deal with sustainable land management;
13. *Further encourages* Parties and non-Parties to actively support and use the FLAP platform in promoting landbirds and sustainable land use and what works to deliver these, including by exchange of ideas and information, education, and awareness-raising;
14. *Requests* the Working Group and the CMS Scientific Council, in liaison with the MLSG and FLAP, with the support of the CMS Secretariat, to support implementation of Action Plans for a ~~first~~ set of species including the European Roller (*Coracias garrulus*) originally adopted through Resolution 12.12 *Action Plans for Birds*, the European Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*), adopted by the 48th Meeting of the Standing Committee in line with Decision 12.21 *Action Plans for Birds*, and the Yellow-breasted Bunting (*Emberiza aureola*), once endorsed; and to continue to develop Action Plans for declining migratory buntings, ~~including the Yellow-breasted Bunting (*Emberiza aureola*);~~
15. *Urges* Parties and *invites* the United Nations Environment Programme and other relevant international organizations, bilateral and multilateral donors, including from the constituencies dealing with poverty alleviation, land degradation neutrality and nature-based climate solutions, to support financially the implementation of the Action Plan including through the provision of financial assistance to developing countries for relevant capacity-building;
16. *Calls on* Parties and the Scientific Council to report progress in implementing the Action Plan, including monitoring and efficacy of measures taken, to future meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

DRAFT DECISIONS

**ACTION PLAN FOR MIGRATORY LAND BIRDS IN THE AFRICAN-EURASIAN REGION
(AEMLAP)**

14.AA *Directed to Parties*

Parties are encouraged to:

- a) take note of the Programme of Work of the AEMLAP Working Group and its priorities, and actively engage in the design, implementation and monitoring of its activities during the intersessional period between COP14 and COP15, with a view to better understanding the migratory pathways used and the key threats affecting migratory landbirds in this region;
- b) promote the use of satellite imagery in conjunction with ground habitat and bird monitoring, to better understand the impacts of land cover and land use change on African-Eurasian migrant birds, and the drivers of those impacts;
- c) take note of relevant projects such as the Eurasian African Bird Migration Atlas and the African Bird Atlas, and incorporate their findings into their species conservation policies for migratory landbirds;
- d) take note of the recent developments towards defining a new institutional framework under the CMS for the Central Asian Flyway (CAF), and ensure synergies are sought across Range States of both AEMLAP and CAF;
- e) assess the status of and the development of action plans for priority bird species using the African-Eurasian flyways.

14.BB *Directed to Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations*

Parties, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations:

- a) and particularly Parties, bilateral and multilateral donors, the Global Environment Facility, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Economic Community of West African States and other relevant international organizations, in the intersessional period between COP14 and COP15, are requested to engage in the implementation of the Programme of Work of the AEML WG, namely by facilitating the exchange of information on key species and habitats, in particular to tackle the barriers to sustainable land use and conservation of habitats in Africa, including the priorities for West Africa and Central Asia, and through the provision of technical assistance to developing countries for relevant capacity-building;
- b) are urged to support the Working Group to organize at least one meeting within the intersessional period between COP14 and COP15 to, among other activities, review the implementation of the Action Plan and the Programme of Work;
- c) are requested to support and cooperate on existing international approaches to retain and enhance tree cover (e.g., Bonn Challenge, Trillion Trees, Great Green Wall) and local aid and development projects around agriculture and forestry, through

monitoring outcomes, enabling comparisons between sites and across years, where possible in properly designed experiments, to provide insights on interventions that can create win-win scenarios for birds as a proxy for biodiversity, for local communities in terms of socioeconomic benefits, and for land degradation neutrality and nature-based climate solutions, or that, at the least, can benefit birds without detriment to these other objectives;

- d) are invited to promote the enrichment of vegetation cover (including, but not limited to trees) through the use of native species and promotion of ecologically sustainable land management practices and wise use of water.

14.CC *Directed to the Scientific Council*

The Scientific Council is requested, subject to the availability of resources, to:

- a) continue the Working Group on African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds until COP15, extending its membership and incorporating expertise from geographical regions currently absent, to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the Action Plan, developing indicators to assess the implementation of the Programme of Work 2021-2026;
- b) work with the Migratory Landbird Study Group, relevant academic institutions, research-funders and the Working Group, to actively promote research that addresses key knowledge gaps relating to migratory landbird conservation in Eurasian landscapes, as outlined in paragraph 8 of Resolution 11.17 (Rev.COP14) *Action Plan for Migratory Landbirds in the African-Eurasian Region (AEMLAP)*;
- c) provide support to the Working Group, its Steering Group and Coordination Unit for the implementation of the Working Group Programme of Work.

14.DD *Directed to the Secretariat*

The Secretariat shall, subject to the availability of resources:

- a) promote the importance of sustainable land use for migratory birds, and the specific practices and approaches outlined in the Programme of Work of the Working Group of the AEMLAP, together with relevant UN agencies and other international institutions, and seek opportunities for collaborative action to encourage sustainable land use for migratory species and people;
- b) work together with relevant United Nations agencies, international organizations and other stakeholders to organize a workshop on the integration of biodiversity requirements into land degradation neutrality delivery at appropriate scale.