



**CONVENTION ON  
MIGRATORY  
SPECIES**

UNEP/CMS/Resolution 14.13

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**INITIATIVE FOR CENTRAL ASIAN FLYWAY**

Adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting (Samarkand, February 2024)

*Recognizing* the efforts by the Government of India to continue the collaborative process, in close consultation with the Range States of the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) and with the CMS and the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) Secretariats, to establish, by COP14, under the umbrella of CMS, an institutional framework, under the leadership of India and in consultation with the other range states and relevant stakeholders,

*Recalling* that the framework aims to focus on conservation priorities and related actions, and measures that support Parties in the implementation of conservation actions for migratory birds and their habitats in the region, through promoting research, studies, assessments, capacity-building and conservation initiatives, thereby further strengthening the implementation of CMS and its avian-related instruments,

*Noting* the BirdLife International 2023 Central Asian Flyway situation analysis, which compiles information on the status of migratory birds and their habitats, conservation, threats and outlines recommendations for action, by the Range States and other relevant stakeholders,

*Welcoming* the fruitful discussions and inputs of the Range States and stakeholders at the fourth meeting of the CAF Range States, hosted by the Government of India in New Delhi on 2 to 4 May 2023, agreeing on the next steps with regard to establishing a framework for international cooperation in the CAF, including non-parties and partnerships, and

*Welcoming* the kind offer of the Government of India to host a Coordinating Unit for the CAF to support and facilitate the initiative, in coordination with the CMS Secretariat,

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

1. *Decides* to establish an Initiative for Central Asian Flyway (ICAF) as a platform for international cooperation under the umbrella of CMS to further strengthen regional cooperation in the implementation of the Convention, and the existing CMS Family flyway instruments, and to build more coherence in the work that Range States, partner organizations and other stakeholders, as appropriate, are devoting to the conservation of all migratory bird taxa and their habitats in this region;
2. *Decides* to establish Coordinating Unit for the ICAF;
3. *Adopts* the Terms of Reference of the Initiative annexed to this Resolution;

4. *Agrees* that the broad objectives of the Initiative are to enhance the conservation, of migratory bird populations and their habitats across the CAF by facilitating the implementation of priorities identified under the Convention, its Strategic Plan and existing CMS Family flyway instruments including through protection, restoration and sustainable management, and to strengthen coordination and cooperation across the species' ranges in Central Asia taking into consideration the needs and livelihoods of local communities, and research and capacity-building efforts;
5. *Recognizes* that the Initiative will, inter alia,:
  - a) enhance cooperation and coordination between the Range States in the CAF region in the conservation of CAF species);
  - b) increase scientific and technical expertise in the region;
  - c) address the conservation priorities identified and monitor the effectiveness of interventions;
  - d) apply targeted conservation approaches;
  - e) create opportunities for donors in the CAF range countries to allocate resources to internationally agreed priority conservation actions; and
  - f) enhance cooperation and promote synergies among the existing CMS and non-CMS instruments and partnerships, such as AEWA, Raptors MOU, AEMLAP, East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP);
6. *Agrees* that the Initiative should be implemented through a Programme of Work (POW), which provides concrete, coordinated and synergistic conservation activities that can be amended or adapted, as required, and which is based on the priorities identified in the CMS Strategic Plan and existing CMS Family flyway instruments and other frameworks;
7. *Requests* the ICAF Coordinating Unit, subject to the availability of resources, to convene regular meetings of the ICAF in cooperation with the Secretariat of CMS, with a view to developing, adopting, facilitating and monitoring the implementation of the Programme of Work and, revising it the Programme of Work as necessary;
8. *Calls upon* the Parties and Signatories to CMS and the CMS flyway instruments and other relevant frameworks as well as other Range States to strengthen their transboundary cooperation through the ICAF, *inter alia* by using other existing international and regional fora and thematic sub-initiatives;
9. *Encourages* Parties, Range States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and donors to contribute to the objectives of the ICAF, and to support the ICAF through financial and technical resources; and
10. *Requests* the Secretariat to report on the implementation of this Resolution to each meeting of the Conference of the Parties, as appropriate.

**Annex to Resolution 14.13****TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE CENTRAL ASIAN FLYWAY INITIATIVE UNDER CMS****Background and purpose**

This initiative is established in line with the mandate provided by the Resolution adopted at COP14 entitled Initiative for the Central Asian Flyway (ICAF), and will assist Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and its associated CMS Family flyway instruments and other, relevant MEAs and Conventions to achieve their conservation objectives regarding migratory bird populations and their habitats in the Central Asian Flyway (CAF).

**Goal**

To contribute to restoring and maintaining in a favourable conservation status the migratory bird species populations occurring in the CAF and ecological connectivity in the flyway.

**Role**

To contribute to restoring and facilitate concerted efforts between the CAF Range States and other stakeholders for the implementation of CMS, other CMS Family flyway instruments, as well as other non-CMS frameworks and partnerships.

**Scope**

The initiative will be regional covering all 30 states of the Central Asian Flyway as follows: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Georgia, India, Iran, Islamic Republic of, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom (British Indian Ocean Territory), Uzbekistan, Yemen.

The initiative will cover migratory bird taxa as identified by CMS and the CMS Family flyway instruments along the CAF, with a specific focus on threatened species, sub-species and populations currently not addressed.

**Remit**

The initiative will:

- a) develop and implement a Programme of Work (POW) that aligns with, and facilitates the development and implementation of, relevant resolutions, decision and plans adopted by the CMS, the CMS Family flyway instruments and other non-CMS frameworks relevant to conservation of migratory birds along the CAF;
- b) take measures that allow and secure ecological connectivity of populations;
- c) identify any relevant priority species or issues of importance in the CAF not covered by existing instruments and frameworks and make recommendations to the governing bodies of the Convention, the CMS Family flyway instruments and other participating non-CMS frameworks to make resolutions, decisions, or other agreements to fill these gaps;

- d) identify research gaps and priorities in the conservation of migratory birds for the CAF;
- e) promote innovative approaches that deliver sustainable benefits to the local communities as well as migratory birds and their habitats;
- f) develop and increase the capacity of Range States, stakeholders and local communities to conserve and manage, as well as monitor, populations of the migratory bird species and their habitats;
- g) assist in resource mobilization for priority actions including through cooperation with international financial institutions and public and/or private organizations;
- h) improve citizen science, education, and awareness on the need to conserve migratory birds and their habitats in the CAF; and
- i) enhance and facilitate communication and information sharing between the CAF Range States.

## **Membership**

The membership of ICAF may comprise:

- Representatives of CAF Range State governments, including CMS Parties and non-Parties to CMS, and of other relevant CMS flyway instruments;
- Representatives of the Secretariats of the participating MEAs and frameworks, i.e. CMS, AEWA, Raptors MOU, and EAAFP;
- Representatives of non-Range States that wish to support the work of the initiative;
- Representatives of the CMS Scientific Council, AEWA Technical Committee, the Raptors MOU Technical Advisory Group, regional CMS Task Forces on Illegal Taking of Migratory Birds, the Saker Falcon Task Force, the multi-stakeholder Energy Task Force, the CMS Preventing Poisoning Working Group, the African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Working Group, the Flyways Working Group, the EAAFP Technical Committee, and other groups with relevant experience;
- Academic institutions, NGOs and other stakeholders, as appropriate;
- Representatives from relevant Bilateral Migratory Bird Agreements and relevant IUCN specialist groups; and
- Relevant independent experts on migratory bird ecology and policy.

## **Governance**

The initiative will elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair from amongst its members.

A steering group will be established to advise the CAF Coordinating Unit, between meetings, composed of representatives of Parties, Signatories and the Secretariats of the Convention, the CMS Family flyway instruments and other participating non-CMS frameworks, other CAF Range States and international organizations and international NGOs.

The initiative will operate by seeking consensus, as much as possible among the group and in accordance with a *modus operandi* which shall be developed once the membership is convened and agreed by all members.

## **Operation**

A Coordinating Unit will be established and hosted by the Government of India in coordination with the CMS Secretariat to fulfil the following functions:

- drafting and coordinating the implementation and monitoring of the CAF Programme of Work, in cooperation with all CAF members;
- organizing the meetings of the initiative and preparing the meeting documents, including meeting reports;
- Organising the meetings of the steering group and preparing the meeting documents, including meeting reports;
- maintaining and moderating the initiative`s communication platform (website, online workspace);
- facilitating implementation of decisions of the initiative;
- facilitating fundraising and resource mobilization; and
- facilitating engagement with stakeholders within and beyond the membership.

Meetings of the initiative will be convened at appropriate intervals, as considered necessary and funding permitting. Between meetings business will be conducted electronically through an online workspace, which will provide the primary mode of communication.

In collaboration with Parties, Signatories, other Range States and relevant international organizations and subject to the availability of funds, the initiative will organize regional workshops in priority areas to assist in the development of appropriate local or regional solutions.