



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

UNEP/CMS/Resolution 12.10 (Rev.COP14)

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CONSERVATION OF AFRICAN-EURASIAN VULTURES

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

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 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,

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, *and ten being listed on CMS Appendix I at COP12 in 2017*,

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 and or rangers/ park managers 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; 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 a number of Vulture Range States, including several member states of the EU and several countries in South Asia and Africa, 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,

Noting CMS-led initiatives established by Resolution 11.15¹ *Preventing Poisoning of Migratory Birds*, including the associated Working Group; Resolution 11.16² *on The Prevention of Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds*, including the associated regional inter-Governmental Task Forces; and Resolution 11.27 (Rev.COP13)³ *on 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,

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, and

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,

1 The Resolution was amended by COP14

2 The Resolution was amended at COP14

3 The Resolution was amended at COP13

*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.COP14) *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.COP14) *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 Coordination Team in the interim until it can facilitate operationalisation of the mandated 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 Global Biodiversity Framework Target 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. 8. 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;
9. *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; and
10. *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.