



**MESSAGE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
BRAULIO FERREIRA DE SOUZA DIAS
on the occasion of
WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY
9-10 MAY 2015**

Each year, migratory birds complete amazing journeys between their breeding and wintering grounds. Migratory birds are a vital part of biodiversity and play a critical role in all ecosystems. They also play an important cultural, aesthetic and economic role in the lives of people around the world. This year, World Migratory Bird Day is being celebrated under the theme “Energy – make it bird friendly!”

Migratory birds serve key functions in the interconnected systems that keep nature healthy, including pollination and seed dispersal of crops for human and livestock consumption, insect and pest regulation and as an aesthetic source of pride for cultures across the globe.

Yet millions of birds struggle every year with the huge expansion of various means of generating and distributing energy. This also has an unfortunate side-effect. Each year, millions of migrating birds are killed or injured from collisions and electrocutions due to power lines as well as barrier effects from energy infrastructure. Birds also suffer effects from habitat loss and degradation and other disturbances from the deployment of hydropower, bio-energy, ocean, solar, wind and geothermal energy technologies. Deploying technologies without proper planning, design and risk assessment can pose a grave threat to all migratory bird species.

Energy cannot be truly sustainable and nature-friendly unless it fully takes biodiversity and, more specifically, migratory birds into consideration. Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity are encouraged to include actions to conserve migratory bird species in the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans implementation process in order to fill gaps in protection and management of critical sites and habitats for migratory bird along all flyways (*Aichi Biodiversity Target 11: By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes*), to take prompt action to address immediate threats to critical sites and habitats for migratory birds and restore key stopover and feeding sites and habitats reducing the direct threats to species, such as illegal killing, unsustainable hunting, bycatch, poisoning, power lines, wind farms and other infrastructure (*Aichi Biodiversity Targets under Strategic Goal B: Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use*), contributing to preventing the extinction of known threatened species and improving



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their conservation status (*Aichi Biodiversity Target 12: By 2020 the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained*).

Furthermore, in the context of the ongoing discussions of the post-2015 development agenda, a decision at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties countries took note of the contribution of ecosystem conservation and restoration, and related functions and services, to sustainable development and poverty eradication; as well as recognizing the contribution of private protected areas, in addition to public and indigenous peoples and local community conserved areas (ICCAs), in the conservation of biodiversity, and encourages the private sector to continue its efforts to protect and sustainably manage ecosystems for the conservation of biodiversity. Parties to the Convention have committed to restoring habitats under Aichi Biodiversity Targets 14 and 15 (*Aichi Biodiversity Target 14: “By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable”*, and, *Aichi Biodiversity Target 15: “By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.”*).

In addition, initiatives such as “Caring for the Coasts”, which aims to conserve and restore global coastal wetlands as part of overall sustainable development and is supported by BirdLife International, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat and the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership; and the Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative, which is actively engaging relevant observer and other non-arctic countries and organizations to help implement, within four flyway-based work plans, conservation actions that need to occur both inside and outside of the Arctic, all reiterate the importance and urgency of taking a global approach to migratory species conservation.

Concerted conservation actions by governments, nature conservation organizations, scientists and the energy sector as well as the general public are necessary to ensure the protection of migratory birds. In doing so, the benefits of sustainable energy can be realized without the risk of harming migratory birds and their habitats.

The continued existence of these vulnerable migratory bird species rests in our collective hands. We urge the nations fortunate enough to host these migratory birds in their flyways to take the urgent steps needed to ensure their conservation.
