

**“Statement from The Coordinating Unit of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia on the occasion of the Workshop on Conservation of the Black Harrier and the Renosterbos Ecosystem at the IUCN- SUME/IAF Conference: “The Role of Falconers and Local Communities in Conservation and Sustainability”.**

The Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia (Raptors MOU) acknowledges and fully supports the collaborative efforts of the Black Harrier Conservation Group which are supported by the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management and the International Association of Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey, in addressing the conservation needs of the Black Harrier (*Circus maurus*). The Black Harrier is a Southern African endemic species found in South Africa, Lesotho, and Namibia. Because of its small and declining population primarily due to habitat loss caused by agricultural and urban development, as well as uncontrolled burning of fynbos and grasslands it is classified as Endangered species and is listed as Category 1 in Table 3 of the Action Plan of the Raptors MOU. The Raptors MOU recognized the urgent need for immediate action to safeguard the species’ future and its Technical Advisory Group has identified the Black Harrier as a priority species for the development of an **International Single Species Action Plan**.

In this context, the Raptors MOU warmly welcomes the establishment of the Black Harrier Task Force that shall engage all experts and stakeholders. This joint initiative represents a crucial step towards addressing the conservation challenges faced by the Black Harrier. The development of a comprehensive Conservation Action Plan for this species will play a vital role in coordinating conservation efforts and guiding the implementation of necessary measures to secure its survival.”

(Statement by Dr Umberto Gallo-Orsi – Head Raptors MoU Coordination Unit CMS/UNEP)