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World Heritage

44 COM

# AMENDMENT

Item of the Agenda	WHC/21/44.COM/8B
Amended Draft Decision	44 COM 8B.6
Amendment submitted by the Delegation of....	Ethiopia, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Nigeria, Oman, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Thailand, Uganda
Date of submission	23/07/2021

## TEXT

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC/21/44.COM/8B and WHC/21/44.COM/INF.8B2,
2. ~~Inscribe Defers~~ the nomination of **Getbol, Korean Tidal Flats (Republic of Korea)**, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (x); taking note of the significant biodiversity values of this region that are potentially of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), in order to allow the State Party to prepare a new nomination focused on criterion (x), and taking account of the need to:
  - ~~a) Critically review the selection of the component parts and configurations from the perspective of conservation of biodiversity and threatened species, taking into account species occurrence and abundance, particularly with respect to migratory birds and endemic marine invertebrates, and including appropriate areas of recognized international conservation significance,~~
  - ~~b) Revise the justification of Outstanding Universal Value in line with a reconfigured nomination focused on criterion (x),~~
  - ~~c) Critically review, for a reconfigured nomination, buffer zone design and effectiveness, expanding proposed buffer zones beyond 100 meters wherever possible, and ensuring that buffer zone regimes mitigate the potential impact of activities in areas surrounding the nominated property,~~
  - ~~d) Further develop the integrated management plan for a reconfigured nomination, with an increased emphasis on the protection and management of biodiversity and threatened species;~~

- ~~3. Expresses its appreciation of the extensive efforts to date regarding this nomination process, including the contributions at all levels, especially with local communities, and encourages the State Party to build on this investment in completing a revised and updated dossier;~~
3. Takes note of the following provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:

### **Brief Synthesis**

The “Getbol” is a natural serial property, comprising four components in the first phase, located on the eastern shoreline of the Yellow Sea on the southwestern coast of the Korean Peninsula. The Yellow Sea, lying between the Korean Peninsula and China, hosts one of the world’s largest and most productive tidal flat ecosystems supporting millions of migratory waterbirds at the heart of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF), whilst providing critical ecosystem services for people. All four sites support globally important populations of threatened migratory waterbirds in the EAAF, and unequivocally meet the criterion for designation as Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA), Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBA), Biosphere Reserves, Ramsar Sites and East Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership Network Sites. Thus, this property is a globally significant example of shared natural heritage beyond national borders.

The four components of the serial property are located along the southwestern coast of the Korean Peninsula: 1) Seocheon Getbol (6,809 ha; buffer zone 3,657 ha), 2) Gochang Getbol (5,531 ha; buffer zone 1,880 ha), 3) Shinan Getbol (110,086 ha; buffer zone 67,254 ha), and 4) Boseong-Suncheon Getbol (5,985 ha; buffer zone 1,801 ha). The total area of the four components is 128,411 ha and their buffer zone is 74,592 ha.

Many human communities along the southwestern coast of the Korean Peninsula have livelihoods dependent on the harvest of marine resources, often based on indigenous knowledge. Anthropogenic activity has transformed some of the coastal wetlands. However, action plans under the legal framework of the Tidal Flat Act adopted in 2019 have been positively catalysing the restoration of tidal flat ecosystem on partially damaged areas.

International cooperation under IUCN umbrella is progressing as an essential step in effectively conserving internationally important habitats for migratory birds in the EAAF. The property, including an extension, will further strengthen the Outstanding Universal Value inherent in the Yellow Sea and the EAAF.

### **Criterion (x)**

Many of the estimated 50 million waterbirds of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF) depend on the Yellow Sea’s coastal wetlands to stage on their annual migration between nesting areas in eastern Asia to as far north as Siberia and Alaska, and non-breeding areas to as far south as Australasia. The EAAF spans 22 countries and has the highest number of migratory waterbird species threatened with extinction, the highest diversity of migratory species and the highest overall number of birds among the world’s eight major flyways.

The concentrations of migratory waterbirds using the four component sites are globally outstanding and represent virtually the full complement of species using the Yellow Sea as a migration stopover or as wintering sites. These include internationally important numbers of 34 species, eight of which are globally threatened and endemic to the EAAF: Spoon-billed Sandpiper (Critically Endangered: ‘Asia’s most threatened migratory bird’); Far Eastern Curlew (Endangered); Black-faced Spoonbill (Endangered); Great Knot (Endangered); Spotted Greenshank (Endangered); Hooded Crane (Vulnerable); Saunders's Gull (Vulnerable); and Chinese Egret (Vulnerable).

The property also supports exceptionally high invertebrate biodiversity with a total of 2,169 known species including 375 species of benthic diatoms, 152 species of marine algae, and 857 species of macrobenthos. As regards marine invertebrates, the property supports five threatened and 47 restricted-range species, including the evolutionarily unique tiger crab.

### **Integrity**

The property includes the largest remaining tidal flats and associated wetlands in the southwestern part of the Korean Peninsula, and is one of the most important sites for migratory waterbirds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF).

The four components of the serial nomination are representative sites that have Outstanding Universal Value as natural habitats for internationally threatened waterbird species and for the conservation of biodiversity.

The boundaries of the four serial components provide adequate protection for migratory birds by including feeding, breeding, and roosting areas. The property encompasses muddy, sandy, mixed, and rocky habitats as well as beach, sand spit, and characteristic sediment body which are widely developed around numerous islands. The stable supply of terrigenous sediments from the Geumgang River greatly contributes to maintaining these exceptionally diverse habitats. Consequently, these globally important and irreplaceable habitats support one of the highest species diversity of waterbirds including threatened species in the EAAF as well as rich biodiversity of other species living in and on the wetlands.

### **Protection and management requirements**

The Republic of Korea has 100% ownership of the property including the marine buffer zones. The four component parts of the serial property are protected by law in their entirety as Wetland Protected Areas (WPAs) under the Wetlands Conservation Act (WCA). Various other laws and regulations, including the Conservation and Management of Marine Ecosystems Act, apply in the property and buffer zones, effectively restricting damaging activities.

The Tidal Flat Act of 2019 (and associated 2019-2023 action plan for tidal flat ecosystem restoration) halts any further reclamation of tidal flats and represents a progressive shift in national coastal management policy from coastal reclamation to tidal flat protection and restoration. This provides a mechanism that further supports the coastal management within and outside the property. The Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries is already overseeing work to restore mudflats on the southwestern coast of the Korean Peninsula degraded by past developments.

Traditional fishing activities are allowed to continue at current levels and are subject to self-governed rules by the fishing cooperatives in accordance with the Fisheries Act and Wetland Conservation Act. The inherent interests of, and traditional management by the local communities play an important role in ensuring the effective protection of the property given that healthy tidal flats underpin many local livelihoods.

Tourism is concentrated in only a few places of the property and its buffer zone (notably around Suncheon City), whereas many of the more remote areas (many of the smaller islands) have little or no tourism.

This property has adequate financial and technical resources, including staffing in all authorities involved, which will be further increased upon inscription. There are many activities underway by different levels of government, non-governmental organizations and local communities that support the effective management and enforcement of the WPAs that make up the property. There are also many measures in place to prevent, reduce and respond to risks (e.g. those related to natural and anthropogenic disasters.)

The integrated management plan will need to be complemented with more details on specific management interventions that would be required for supporting and maintaining the OUV, which will be further enhanced by the State Party as it completes its proposed Phase II with additional sites;

4. Underlines the global conservation significance of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway and the critical importance of the Yellow Sea region habitat for the survival of many species of waterbirds;
5. Notes that the decision to inscribe the property is made on the understanding that the State Party is in agreement with the following requests of the Committee, which should be implemented in time for consideration at the 48th session of the Committee in 2025 in order to fully address the requirements of the *Operational Guidelines*:
  - a) Submit a single Phase II nomination to include nine additional components in order to further strengthen the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of this property, fully taking into account comprehensive overview,
  - b) Clearly demonstrate the boundaries of each component in Phase II to meet integrity requirements, providing evidence that the boundaries sufficiently cover all attributes related with the stated OUV,
  - c) Present an integrated management system and plan to conserve attributes at national and local level including Phase II,
  - d) Ensure that there is no further development that would have negative impact on the attributes of conservation significance in each component of the nominated property;
6. Notes with appreciation the confirmed commitment demonstrated by the State Party and local authorities to decide to participate in Phase II, as an integral part of the inscribed property;
7. Also encourages the State Party, following Decision **43 COM 8B.3**, to further strengthen collaboration with other concerned States Parties to improve the conservation of critical habitats within the Eastern Asian-Australasian Flyway in relation to potential future transnational serial nominations, and/or extensions and, in particular, to coordinate with the State Party of China in relation to the anticipated Phase II nomination for Migratory Bird Sanctuaries along the Coast of Yellow Sea-Bohai Gulf of China, potentially through the 2007 Korea-China Agreement on the Protection of Migratory Birds;
- 4.8. Requests IUCN to closely cooperate with the State Party to ensure that the future nomination can satisfy the requirements provided in Paragraph 5 and the target in Paragraph 7.-