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Subject: EU priorities at the United Nations and the 73rd United Nations General Assembly (September 2018 – September 2019)

Delegations will find in the annex the EU priorities at the United Nations and at the 73rd session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, as adopted by the Council at its 3628th meeting held on 25 June 2018.

EU priorities at the United Nations and the 73rd United Nations General Assembly (September 2018 – September 2019)

A European Agenda for Multilateralism

Today, as much as ever, the EU will engage to boost multilateralism. The Global Strategy on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy affirms that the EU will strive for a strong United Nations as the bedrock of the multilateral rules-based order. The UN brings unique value-added to our citizens. In the coming year, the key priority for the EU, together with like-minded partners, will be to support the UN through a period of change. This means translating the EU commitment to multilateralism into a **proactive multilateral agenda**. Today is also the time to defend and promote universal values at the core of our actions. The 70th anniversary year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is an opportunity to continue to advance this essential work together with the UN, particularly at a time, when there have been serious negative trends around the world in human rights.

This will be a decisive year for UN reform. The EU is a strong supporter of the UN Secretary General's ambitious reform agenda, has a strategic interest to see comprehensive reforms unfolding this year, and will vigorously support its implementation. The EU will be at the forefront of a more effective UN, building **bridges in support of multilateralism**. In a volatile and unpredictable world, there is a need to stand behind the UN. The EU will seek to broaden conversations, build new cross-regional alliances and project influence. Partnerships and outreach will be essential to deliver a true and strong multilateralism at the country level, where it matters the most.

In a rapidly evolving global context, conflicts have deepened and new dangers have emerged. The EU and the UN are indispensable partners to deliver peace and security. The EU will seek an integrated approach across the UN pillars in support of prevention. The EU will also strongly support the UN in its efforts to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda not least in pursuance of the goal of poverty eradication. The empowerment of women is a cross-cutting imperative. The EU will support the UN as a global convenor and enabler of solutions across all policy areas. An overarching EU-UN strategic partnership is needed for the future.

One of the keys to this strategic partnership resides in enhanced cooperation with the African Union (AU). The ground breaking joint trilateral AU-EU-UN work on Libya/migration aims to pave the way for enhanced cooperation in the wider peace and security agenda. For instance the support being provided to the G5 Sahel Joint Force is a key example of the importance of investing in global-regional security partnerships. Building on this political momentum, the coming year will be about pulling together all the different strands of cooperation with the AU while focusing on concrete deliverables on the ground.

Europe will show unity and resolve in making this coming year an opportunity to fortify multilateralism, setting the course for a European agenda for multilateralism. This year's strong presence of EU Member States at the UN Security Council will contribute to a positive forward momentum.

Recognizing the importance of the United Nations at the core of effective multilateralism, the European Union and its Member States¹, for the duration of the 73rd session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, will focus on the following **interlinked and mutually reinforcing priorities** under three main headings:

I. PEACE AND CONFLICT PREVENTION

II. A COMMON POSITIVE AGENDA

III. AN EXPANDING GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

¹ Throughout this document the use of 'EU' does not prejudice whether the competence lies with the 'EU', the 'EU and its Member States' or exclusively with 'Member States'.

I. PEACE AND CONFLICT PREVENTION

Violent conflicts today are complex and increasingly protracted. Building on the strong synergies between the Global Strategy on EU's Foreign and Security Policy and the UN vision of prevention as the golden thread running through all UN activities, the EU will galvanize joint efforts to implement conflict prevention. This means early engagement to address emerging threats – including in partnership with the AU - elevating joint cooperation and encouraging shared analysis and wider discussions at political level.

The EU will pursue an integrated approach pooling all its tools and policies in support of prevention. Women and youth's meaningful participation in all aspects of peace and conflict prevention is critical to success, including in peace processes. **Mediation** is a crucial tool to foster peace. In the coming year, the EU will further enhance cooperation with the UN on mediation and step up efforts to carry out joint mediation actions, including with the AU and other partners.

A comprehensive shift toward conflict prevention and sustaining peace must also embrace peace operations. Peacekeeping should be part of prevention efforts and contribute to political processes. However, peacekeeping is facing unprecedented challenges. The EU supports efforts to improve how peacekeeping performs to better protect the populations it serves. In this respect, the EU supports the UNSG Action for Peacekeeping initiative. The EU sees peacekeeping in the context of the whole peace continuum, with prevention as a clear priority. This is reflected in the 2019-2022 priorities for the UN-EU Strategic Partnership on Peace Operations and Crisis Management.

This **refocus on prevention** calls for an integrated approach. Peace and security are indivisible from sustainable development and human rights. The EU will support and shape UN action to integrate conflict prevention, governance and the rule of law, development, human rights and Responsibility to Protect (RtoP) in tackling the challenges of sustaining peace. This also includes addressing environmental and climate change related drivers of instability. Strengthening resilience, ownership and regional cooperation will also be key.

Prevention must be sustained to address structural issues and strengthen institutions. Investing in human rights, democracy and sustainable development is the best way to prevent societies from descending into crisis. Prevention is a long-term process, which requires reinforcing and steering. Fostering state and societal resilience, as reflected in the Global Strategy on EU's Foreign and Security Policy, will be vital to realise our common positive agenda.

II. A COMMON POSITIVE AGENDA

In this year marking the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the EU strongly supports the pledge by the UN Secretary General to move forward the human rights agenda.² The **promotion and protection of human rights is at the heart of multilateralism**. The EU reaffirms its support to an effective and efficient functioning of the Human Rights Council and will use this platform to promote human rights with a strong common voice. The EU will mobilize to identify and support positive human rights narratives, building on the vision of a human rights based 2030 Agenda. The EU will also continue to support the International Criminal Court, as we mark the 20th anniversary of the Rome statute.

The **2030 Agenda is our joint blueprint for action** in the years ahead and across all the pillars of the UN. The EU is playing globally as well as domestically a leading role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in cooperation with all its partners. The EU sees the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as an extraordinary opportunity to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions: economic, societal and environmental. For the first time, the EU and its partners are committed to a **universal agenda for progress**, providing a comprehensive and shared framework for action until 2030. In this perspective, the EU will step up its engagement with youth pro-actively targeting exclusion and inequalities to leave no one behind. Harnessing the potential of a growing young population – particularly in Africa – is an important challenge and a formidable opportunity for all.

² Council Conclusions on EU Priorities in UN Human Rights Fora in 2018, February 2018.

The EU will implement the SDGs through a range of actions across all policy fields, including the new Consensus on Development, which addresses the key themes of the 2030 Agenda: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. Its implementation will be closely coordinated with the implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change and other international commitments. With the aim of achieving the SDGs and leaving no-one behind, the EU will also seek to unlock the potential of the energy sector.

The EU will vigorously support the UN Secretary-General's plans for reform of the UN Development system to better deliver on the 2030 Agenda. Almost three years since its adoption, it is key for the UN development system to become fully fit for purpose to deliver on the 2030 Agenda, and to make the UN system truly coordinated, efficient, effective, integrated, transparent and accountable.

In this perspective, the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls, launched in 2017, illustrates a new and innovative joined up approach. This initiative also reaffirms the EU's resolute and unwavering commitment to gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment, a common EU-UN imperative.

In line with the shared policy of "zero tolerance" on sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), the EU will support to the UN Secretary-General in tackling SEA as a top priority.

III. AN EXPANDING GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

In this increasingly complex global landscape, there are important global challenges – and opportunities - ahead of us.

The coming year will be crucial to **accelerate climate action** and to operationalize the landmark Paris Agreement. Together with Canada and China, the EU will lead the way and organize the 2018 Ministerial on Climate Action renewing global momentum to the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement. Climate change also presents new challenges, especially to the poor and vulnerable countries and communities. The EU strongly supports actions including at the UN Security Council to strengthen the climate-security nexus. The high-level event on climate and security in Brussels in June will explore new avenues to address this rising challenge.

The EU will continue to engage actively in the UN negotiations on a **Global Pact for the Environment**. Recalling its commitment towards international oceans governance as a coherent cross sectoral, rules-based approach to oceans, the EU will continue to participate fully in the elaboration of a new legally binding instrument under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the **conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ)** at the UN. The EU will further promote safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed **oceans** at global level in cooperation with the UN ahead of the 5th Our Ocean Conference in Indonesia. At the outset of the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development 2018-2028", there are growing global challenges linked to **water**. The EU will strengthen its water diplomacy, cooperating with the UN to reinforce effective governance of water resources and underlining the links between water and human rights, migration and peace and conflict. The EU will also undertake political outreach promoting global membership to the 1992 Water Convention of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

This will be a decisive year for the **Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact on Safe, orderly and Regular Migration** based on the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants of September 2016. The EU and its Member States, as appropriate, are pro-actively engaging in the UN processes, shaping their content and placing migration and refugee response firmly on the UN agenda. The Global Compacts present an opportunity to bring forward a common approach on migration and forced displacement at the global level. The EU and its Member States, as appropriate, will engage to achieve robust, balanced and inclusive Global Compacts as political and non-legally binding international cooperative frameworks based on shared responsibility and solidarity in line with the commitments of the 2030 Agenda and the UN Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. The EU recognises that States have a sovereign right to determine whom to admit to their territory and have rights and responsibilities to manage and control their borders in full compliance with their international obligations.

The EU will remain committed towards an **improved humanitarian response system**, in full respect of the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. The EU will intensify efforts to strengthen the respect for international humanitarian law, as well as refugee law and international human rights law, supporting full, prompt, impartial and effective investigations in case of violations. The EU will also use the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (GP20) in order to support the UN system in finding durable solutions for the more than 40 million IDPs worldwide.

There are distinct links between conflicts and the spread of terrorism. Terrorism needs globally coordinated responses to defeat it. **Counterterrorism (CT) and preventing/countering violent extremism (P/CVE) are top EU priorities.** The UN Global CT Strategy, and the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, are cornerstones for EU CT and P/CVE efforts. The EU attaches great importance to a holistic approach to tackle terrorism by strengthening law enforcement, information exchange, eliminating the exploitation of the internet for terrorist purposes and cutting off resources of terrorism financing in full compliance with the rule of law and international law, including human rights law and international humanitarian law. The EU will actively engage in the full implementation of the UN Global Counterterrorism Coordination Compact.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is a threat to global security. The EU will work towards a better implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540, complemented by Resolution 2325 adopted in December 2016, as a key element of the international non-proliferation architecture. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. The entry into force and universalisation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as well as the effective implementation of The Hague Code of Conduct (HCoC) are top priorities for the EU.

The EU will promote the full implementation and universalisation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The use of chemical weapons is unacceptable, constitutes a breach of international law and may amount to a war crime or a crime against humanity; the EU will support efforts aimed to ensure that all those responsible are held to account. The EU supports the work of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

The EU will ensure that effective measures are taken to tackle other disarmament issues related to the illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), outer space and advanced and emerging conventional weapons and technologies. The EU will engage to end the protracted stalemate at the Conference on Disarmament.

A positive force for change

A European agenda for multilateralism is the best way to promote our values and interests. The UN remains the lynchpin of the EU global engagement. In our turbulent times, the EU-UN partnership is both stronger and more important than ever. In the coming year, the EU and the UN will stand together to promote a rules-based global order grounded in international law, dedicated to the promotion and protection of human rights. Together, the EU and the UN will continue to engage as a positive force for change.