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Subject: EU priorities at the United Nations and the 71st United Nations General Assembly (September 2016 – September 2017)

Delegations will find in the annex the EU priorities at the United Nations and the 71st United Nations General Assembly (September 2016 - September 2017), adopted by the Council at its 3482nd meeting held on 18 July 2016.

**EU priorities at the United Nations and the 71st United Nations General Assembly
September 2016 – September 2017**

Today, as much as ever, the United Nations remains the lynchpin of our global engagement. Our commitment to principles and purpose of the Charter of the United Nations remains undiminished. For decades the European Union and the United Nations have joined forces to advance peace and security, development and human rights.

Over the past year we have seen a number of impressive achievements, including agreement on the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the momentous signing of the Paris Climate Agreement. The UN General Assembly and the Security Council also saw a growing consensus on the fight against Da'esh and other terrorist groups.

The coming year will be about consolidation and implementation of what we achieved.

Yet, serious global challenges persist. They need a global response with a strong and effective United Nations, ready to address existing and tackle new challenges ahead. We need to reform and reinvigorate the global governance systems. We will also need to develop global norms and rules in fields where we do not yet have strong global institutions, such as cyber, energy or space. The global migration and refugee crisis will require a truly global responsibility-sharing.

The EU reaches out to the wider UN family to meet those challenges. Sustaining peace will require a consistent and joined-up approach across the pillars, with prevention ever more central. The EU Global Strategy specifically underlines the importance of an effective global governance system. The new Secretary General can count on the EU's full partnership and support in this important year of transition.

Recognising the importance of the United Nations at the core of effective multilateralism, the European Union and its Member States¹, for the duration of the 71st session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, will focus on the following priorities under the three main headings:

I. SUSTAINING PEACE

II. A MORE JUST AND HUMANE WORLD

III. AN ENDURING AGENDA FOR CHANGE

I. SUSTAINING PEACE

Securing Peace

The increasingly protracted and complex nature of conflicts and crises requires a common agenda and an integrated UN response focusing on preventive diplomacy, mediation, peacebuilding, resilience, peace keeping operations and special political missions, referred to as peace operations in the report of the High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations. Institutional and sectoral divides must be overcome to work more closely and in a more integrated fashion. A comprehensive approach is essential: crisis prevention, humanitarian aid, stabilisation, peacebuilding, sustainable development, climate mitigation, security sector reform and human rights action should complement and reinforce each other.

Sustaining peace requires better integration of the three pillars of the UN's work. In this context, Agenda 2030 implementation offers an opportunity to strengthen the security-development nexus. Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions underlines just this.

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'.

UN peacekeeping and special political missions will remain a key tool in our efforts to foster stability. We will continue to seek to strengthen them, to sustain or increase the participation of EU Member States in peace keeping operations and special political missions, and will work closely with the UN to put measures into place that encourage synergies and mutual support, strengthening our partnership on the ground.

The EU actively contributed to last year's review processes under the UN peace and security architecture. The EU welcomes the concrete proposals that have emerged and is ready to play a leading role to help the UN implement these recommendations. A continued focus must now be on coherence and synergies, effectively and efficiently utilising the continuum of responses to crises. Never before have so many key UN reviews/reports been so unanimous in their call to do more to prevent crises and seek political solutions. Preventive diplomacy and mediation efforts must be stepped up. The UN Alliance of Civilizations has a role to play in this context.

The recent past has shown too painfully where inaction of the Security Council can lead to. The Member States of the EU recall their support for the ACT code of conduct and the commitment made on the need to take timely and decisive action to end the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes, or to prevent such crimes. The EU will continue its support for the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect principle.

Together with like-minded partners, the EU will work for the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, as well as men and boys, including sexual violence in conflicts, and to end impunity. The full implementation of all the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security is a priority, calling for an active involvement of women in conflict prevention and solution and on the role of women in combatting violent extremism.

The EU calls for continuing and consistent efforts towards a UN-wide approach to tackling sexual violence and ending sexual exploitation and abuse by peace keepers. Those who commit such crimes must be held accountable. Justice must be delivered in a manner that is accessible to the survivors. We have to work together to strengthen efforts to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, to investigate and take disciplinary action in a timely fashion and to ensure accessible reporting mechanisms and support for the victims. The measures taken by the Secretary-General, including the appointment of a Special Coordinator, as well as resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly are steps in the right direction.

Countering Terrorism, Including Preventing Violent Extremism

The UN plays a key role in **countering terrorism, including preventing violent extremism**. The UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy contains a complete set of measures which must be implemented in its entirety. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the UN Counter Terrorism Strategy. This is an opportunity to proceed to a more in-depth review of the UN CT strategy, taking into account latest discussions on Preventing Violent Extremism in light of the Secretary General's Preventing Violent Extremism Action Plan.

The EU will in the meantime continue to address internally Counter Terrorism and Preventing Violent Extremism through related legislative work and cooperation mechanisms. We will also continue to engage on CT/PVE in our extensive bilateral cooperation, in particular in the Middle East and North Africa, Sahel, the Horn of Africa, Turkey and the Western Balkans. The EU will furthermore continue its active participation in the Global Counterterrorism Forum as a means to further promote UN standards and policy in this field.

Da'esh and other terrorist groups pose a threat to the international community and in particular to the stability of the Middle East and North Africa. The fight against Da'esh and other terrorist groups must be conducted in parallel with the search for lasting political solutions in the regions concerned. The EU supports the active role of the UN in facilitating such political solutions and in employing systematic preventive measures to address the root causes.

The EU reiterates in this context its strong support for UN Security Council Resolutions, in particular 2170, 2178 and 2253 and calls on all countries to take the necessary measures to ensure their swift implementation with full respect of human rights and the Rule of Law, specifically to address the Foreign Terrorist Fighters phenomenon and counter terrorist financing.

Responding to Regional Challenges

Too many people have no peace and security in their own country. Many critical country situations require firm and consistent international action, including the following countries and regions.

The EU reiterates its full support to the UN-led efforts, notably the Special Envoy for **Syria**, to facilitate a political transition. Only a Syrian-led political process leading to a peaceful and inclusive transition, based on the principles of the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012 and relevant UNSCRs, will bring back stability to Syria, enable peace and reconciliation and create the necessary environment for efficient counter terrorism efforts, while maintaining the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian state.

The EU insists on the need for all International Syria Support Group members to do all possible to swiftly strengthen the implementation and monitoring of the cessation of hostilities, secure country wide humanitarian access and make progress on the issue of detainees. Serious negotiations are required to reach a genuine political transition which would include a broad, inclusive non-sectarian transitional governing body with full executive powers.

The EU remains united in its commitment to achieving the two-state solution in the **Middle East Peace Process**. We will work in tandem with the United Nations and the UN Security Council, in this. The parties to the conflict will be urged to avoid actions that could fuel further tensions and instead address underlying causes of the conflict.

The EU will work to ensure coherence among the various initiatives to revive the Middle East peace process. In that context the EU is determined alongside other international and regional partners, to bring a concrete and substantial contribution to a global set of incentives for the parties to make peace with a view to an international conference planned to be held before the end of the year. Through the EU Special Representative for the Middle East peace process and the Middle East Quartet ("the Quartet"), the EU will continue to play an active role. It will provide recommendations on significant transformative steps to be taken on the ground, consistent with prior agreements, in order to offer a political horizon. The regional dimension, which constitutes a key element for a comprehensive peace, remains essential as the Arab Peace Initiative could energise and incentivise the Middle East peace process.

In **Libya**, the EU will continue to provide substantial support to the Government of National Accord and the Libyan people in key areas, including rule of law, economic cooperation and security sector reform, at the request of Libyan authorities and in line with their priorities, in full coordination with and support of UNSMIL. The Security Council will play an important role in Libya with regard to UN sanctions and the possible authorisation for specific EU CSDP initiatives.

In the **Mediterranean** the EU will continue to support regional cooperation and integration by means of existing frameworks.

The EU will continue to support the international efforts, namely the Minsk process, aiming at finding a lasting political and peaceful solution to the crisis in **Ukraine** based on the respect for territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine, as well as strict adherence to international standards. In this context, the EU will continue to call for the implementation of the Minsk agreements which were endorsed by UNSC Resolution 2202 (2015) and pursue its policy of non-recognition of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, in line with UNGA Resolution 68/262.

The EU is firmly committed to long term reform and stability in **Afghanistan**. The next Ministerial Conference on Afghanistan in Brussels in October 2016, hosted by the EU and the Government of Afghanistan will be an important opportunity to reconfirm the Afghan commitments towards continued reforms and progress, and to allow the international community to signal sustained political and financial support to Afghan peace, state-building, and sustainable development, including counter-narcotics. The EU reiterates its full support for the continued important role played by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and all the UN agencies in supporting the Afghan people. We will continue to support all international efforts aiming at creating an environment conducive to a sustainable Afghan peace process and to back UNAMA's indispensable commitment to the promotion of human rights and the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

African nations have been working to establish and develop the capabilities of its own response teams to those situations at regional and sub-regional level, through the encompassing Africa Peace and Security Architecture. The challenges are significant and cannot be tackled without the support, including financial, from international partners like the UN and the EU. The good co-operation and complementarity between the two organisations is evident in Mali and the Central African Republic, for example, with an increasing involvement of European troop contributing countries in UN operations and the parallel deployment of CSDP operations; all in support of African efforts to re-establish a peaceful environment in those countries. The EU is keen to develop a structured framework to strengthen trilateral co-operation in Africa, based on the exchange of experiences on the ground and the frequent contacts at political and technical level that already exist between the UN, the African Union and the EU. The EU is also keen to support a stronger capacity by African countries and regional organisations to deploy their own resources when facing emergency situations. We will endeavour to provide equipment and training to African forces so that they can be used to keep and ensure respect for peace across the African continent.

Disarmament and Non-proliferation

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is a threat to global security. The risk of weapons of mass destruction getting into the hands of non-State actors and terrorist groups makes it vital to support UN efforts to prevent non-State actors and terrorist groups from developing, acquiring, manufacturing, possessing and transporting such weapons, and their delivery systems. The EU will work towards better implementation of UNSC Resolution 1540 and will actively contribute to its Comprehensive Review, which must be completed in 2016.

The EU will promote the importance of the full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and its universalisation and work to end the unacceptable use of chemical weapons in the Middle East. The EU will promote the full implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, its universalisation and national implementation and the EU positions in this regard, also in view of the 8th Review Conference of that Convention in 2016.

The EU will promote the universalisation and implementation of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with Article VI of the NPT, and an important element in the further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful uses. Furthermore, the EU considers the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to be of crucial importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and its entry into force remains a top priority for the European Union.

We should spare no efforts to bring the Conference on Disarmament and UN Disarmament Commission back on track and, in that context, remain open to any new initiatives that command consensus. For the European Union, the immediate commencement and early conclusion of the negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein, remains a clear priority.

The EU promotes the universalisation and full implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and will support the implementation of the outcome of the Conferences of States Parties. The EU will also support the UN instruments aimed at preventing, combating and eradicating the diversion and the illicit trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons and their ammunitions.

The EU emphasises the role of women in all disarmament related discussions and decisions.

II. A MORE JUST AND HUMANE WORLD

Migration and Global Population Flows

Addressing the largest global displacement crisis since the World War II and the **increasing migratory and refugee flows** will require a consistent and coordinated effort by the entire international community.

The EU will draw on the frameworks set out by the United Nations, including the 2030 Agenda and the forthcoming UN Summit on Addressing the Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, towards the establishment of a global and efficient cooperation framework. It should be based on shared responsibilities, capable of addressing migration and displacement challenges worldwide, underscored by a renewed commitment to international humanitarian law.

The EU will promote development-oriented approaches, recognising the positive impact of planned and well-managed migration policies for both countries of origin, transit and host countries. The international community should help host communities and governments to enhance the resilience and socio-economic integration of forcibly displaced people and to set up and implement policies that are conducive to self-reliance at a national level.

We will work with all UN partners to step up international efforts in tackling the multi-dimensional root causes of the current refugee and irregular migration crisis and broader forced displacement, the smuggling of migrants and human trafficking, to address the specific challenges faced by women and by children in migration processes; protecting victims and saving lives should be utmost priorities for the entire international community. In addition, stronger efforts are needed to enhance channels for legal migration and ensuring the readmission of individuals not eligible for asylum in line with international law.

We should strengthen the nexus between humanitarian and development assistance to address the migration, displacement and refugee crisis, while enlarging the donor base, further mobilising contributions from the private sector and committing to a more efficient use of available resources.

Human Rights and International Law

Building on the close EU-UN partnership on **human rights** the EU will foster the promotion and protection of human rights world-wide. We seek to continue building cross-regional alliances to advance our thematic human rights priorities and take up country situations that require the attention of the UN. The EU will seek opportunities to promote the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Civil and Political Rights in December 2016, as we mark their 50th anniversary.

We will give further priority to the vital role of civil society organisations and human rights defenders, including the defence of civil society space and the promotion of NGO participation in the work of the United Nations, and discussing the possible measures necessary to enable the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them. The EU will also continue to pay special attention to all gender issues, including the advancement of the rights of women, women's empowerment, and gender equality. The EU remains committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the ICPD and the outcomes of their review conferences and remains committed to sexual and reproductive health and rights, in this context. The EU will work for the promotion and protection of the rights of the child worldwide. The EU will promote the principles of equality and non-discrimination, firmly opposing discrimination on any ground or status, including discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Against the background of increased challenge to the global human rights acquis at recent Human Rights Council and UNGA Third Committee sessions, the EU is resolved to be ever more vigilant and pro-active to keep key human rights issues in focus, to defend the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights, and to safeguard the independence of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights of human rights' special procedures, as well as of the treaty-monitoring Bodies.

The EU we will continue to work towards ensuring human rights-compliant solutions to the migration and refugee crisis. The EU will also continue to promote the mainstreaming of human rights across the work of the UN and the responsiveness and effectiveness of the UN system in the face of grave human rights crises (including the Human Rights up Front initiative).

Enhanced attention should be paid to the international protection of refugees, the principle of non-refoulement and the right to asylum but also to addressing the special needs of migrants in vulnerable situations that do not qualify for refugee status. The EU will work to uphold and strengthen the implementation of international law in this field, including by encouraging all countries to sign and ratify the 1951 Refugee convention and its 1967 Protocol and encouraging the development of existing soft law and regional mechanisms.

The EU promotes the rule of law at the national and international levels, international criminal justice, in particular the International Criminal Court, access to justice, accountable and transparent institutions, inclusive and participatory decision-making, corruption-free societies.

Strengthening the Humanitarian Space

Humanitarian action has for several years been faced with serious challenges. Recent conflicts have been characterised by longer duration, brutality and blatant disregard for norms including International Humanitarian Law, unprecedented levels of suffering and forced displacement internally or across international borders, as well as increasing deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure, humanitarian workers and restrictions on humanitarian access. Climate change and growing economic inequality have also contributed to increased vulnerabilities of certain populations driving people out of their homes.

The international aid system has to further adapt in order to cope with the scale and nature of current challenges. The response needs to become more efficient, streamlining the working methods of both the donor community and the humanitarian operators. We need to ensure synergies and coherence between humanitarian aid and development cooperation, stabilisation and conflict prevention from the pre-crisis stage onwards, to better anticipate, prepare for and respond to a crisis or disaster, aiming at ending humanitarian needs and to build resilience. There is also a need to link up further with and strengthen existing local capacities, and to rethink our approaches to better and more sustainably meet the needs of the affected populations both in the short and longer term. Despite an unprecedented growth in humanitarian funding, the needs have grown even more rapidly and the widening gap between the two has to be tackled.

The first ever World Humanitarian Summit was convened in May 2016 to address this situation and respond to some of the challenges. The EU strongly reiterates its long-standing collective and individual commitment to principled and effective humanitarian action, including by endorsing the core responsibilities of the Secretary General's report "One humanity: Shared responsibility" and its "Agenda for Humanity". The EU remains committed to responding to and preventing gender-based violence in crisis situations. The global community must assume its shared responsibility to save lives, alleviate suffering and preserve human dignity.

Strong UN leadership should ensure inclusive, transparent and effective follow-up, including through existing intergovernmental processes of ECOSOC and UNGA in its 71st session, but also through Agency Executive Boards and other means available, to help translate the commitments made at the Summit.

The EU will continue to support the leading role of the UN in the coordination and delivery of international humanitarian assistance as well as continue to advocate for the respect of the humanitarian principles, International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights Law and Refugee Law.

III. AN ENDURING AGENDA FOR CHANGE

Agreeing on the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Climate deal was a once in a generation opportunity to shape our future. Last year's effort must be followed by determined action. There is currently insufficient integration between strategies on climate change, sustainable development, humanitarian aid and peace-building issues. We are willing to engage multilaterally to change this and work towards a comprehensive global agenda.

2030 Agenda

The universal, integrated and indivisible **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, represents a common reference point not only for all UN member states and other stakeholders, from civil society to business. It will guide action for sustainable development over the next 15 years for people, planet, prosperity, peace and in partnership. We have no choice but to make the 2030 Agenda a success both within the EU and externally. Agreements must now lead to real changes in peoples' lives, leaving no-one behind.

We need a holistic, integrated and comprehensive approach from all actors, in all sectors and at all levels to maintain the universal, indivisible and integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda. The monitoring of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda will be vital for a success. The EU will continue to support the development of a coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review process in the UN.

Drivers and root causes of irregular migration, forced displacement and other forms of risky migration should be addressed in a systematic, comprehensive and long term approach, striving for the early and effective implementation.

The third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) to be held in Quito in October 2016 will be amongst the first UN conferences to take place following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and COP21. Habitat III offers a unique opportunity to adopt a global New Urban Agenda that fosters strong relationship and synergies between urbanisation, sustainable development, and climate change.

Climate Change

Climate change is one of the most complex and urgent domestic and foreign policy issues facing us today. Its potentially destabilising impacts – including on migration, food security, reliable access to resources, water and energy, the spread of epidemic disease and social and economic instability – make it a threat multiplier that amplifies situations of conflict.

The 2015 Paris Agreement is the cornerstone of the emerging global climate change governance regime. It represents an ambitious, balanced, equitable and legally binding agreement. Early ratification and entry into force is desirable as it would provide all countries and stakeholders with the legal certainty that the Agreement begins operating quickly. Maintaining the positive momentum from Paris will require sustained political and diplomatic mobilisation at global level, including non-state actors such as businesses and local authorities which play an increasing role in enhancing the effectiveness of multilateral action.

We will remain proactive at the international climate negotiations under UNFCCC to ensure that the ambition set by the Agreement is translated in all its implementing aspects, such as detailed provisions on transparency and accountability, sustainable development mechanisms, and technology mechanisms.

The EU is committed to scaling up the mobilisation of climate finance in the context of meaningful mitigation actions in order to contribute its share of the developed countries' goal to jointly mobilise USD 100 billion per year by 2020 from a wide variety of sources.

Similarly, the EU intends to continue its leadership in nurturing multilateral climate action by promoting ambitious outcomes in the context of the negotiations in the International Civil Aviation Organisation and the International Maritime Organisation to address greenhouse gas emissions, as well as under the Montreal Protocol negotiations.

UN Reform and Increased Efficiency

Effective multilateralism needs an **effective United Nations** at its core.

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development together with the results of the UN reviews on Peace Operations, the Peacebuilding Architecture and Women, Peace and Security offer a unique opportunity for institutional change and better cooperation between the different pillars of the UN. With the arrival of the new Secretary General, it is timely to undertake a comprehensive UN reform with a new strategic agenda for the next 15 years.

The integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda requires that its implementation is supported by a UN that steps up its efforts to delivering integrated and coordinated policy support (notably through its UN Development System). We need a UN Development System that works in a more integrated fashion, with strengthened inter-agency work, joint policy teams, joint programming, joint implementation of programmes, together "delivering as one". The new Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review will be essential in this regard and a profound reform should be sought.

A more efficient functioning of UNGA committees as well as other UN bodies should also be addressed. Collectively, we all have a role in enhancing the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, accountability and representativeness of the whole UN system, including the Security Council.

These reforms will have to address new challenges and opportunities while reprioritising within the system.

The EU welcomes all proposals in order to guarantee that the UN is fit for purpose and can deliver flexible, effective and efficient solutions for the pressing issues of our time.

The new Secretary General should make it a priority to tackle those issues early on. She or he should have the vision to promote the UN's role in line with the values and principles of the UN Charter, to which the EU remains deeply attached. The Secretary General should meet the highest standards of competence, integrity, effectiveness and efficiency.
