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Subject: EU priorities at the United Nations and the 74th United Nations General Assembly (September 2019 – September 2020)

Delegations will find in the annex the EU priorities at the United Nations and at the 74th United Nations General Assembly (September 2019 - September 2020), as adopted by the Council at its 3709th meeting held on 15 July 2019.

**EU priorities at the United Nations and the 74th United Nations
General Assembly, September 2019 – September 2020**

Promoting multilateralism and supporting a revitalised United Nations

1. The European Union is an indispensable partner of the United Nations to promote and strengthen multilateralism and the rules-based international order. At a time of fragmentation and polarisation, the strong EU-UN partnership in advancing and shaping the multilateral agenda is needed more than ever. Our common engagement for a more peaceful, cooperative and just world rests solidly on **our common values** - peace, democracy, human rights, the rule of law, gender equality, sustainable development - as well as on the **EU's profound commitment to effective multilateralism**.
2. In recent years, the **EU has intensified its engagement** as a global player and is **translating multilateralism into action**, in line with the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy and the Council conclusions on EU action to strengthen rules-based multilateralism. In September 2018, the EU and the UN confirmed the deepening of their partnership in several areas and are now working to implement global solutions to global challenges, in view of a safer and better world for all.

3. In 2020, we will celebrate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations. This will be a unique moment to confirm our engagement with the UN, our commitment to its values and principles and to multilateralism. Multilateralism is the only effective solution in today's complex world, with its many global challenges. A rapidly changing world calls for **increased public diplomacy efforts** in support of international cooperation and demands a **reinvigorated United Nations that delivers for all**. It is our common responsibility to demonstrate the **added value and relevance of the UN**, to prove that it serves the democratic aspirations of and delivers benefits to people around the world. In this vein, the EU will continue to work with and support the United Nations, as part of its efforts to **promote, develop and reform** the rules-based international order.
4. For the UN, effectiveness and accountability are what matters today and for the future. The EU will support necessary reforms of the bodies and organs of the UN system, including the comprehensive reform of the UN Security Council, to make them more effective, transparent, democratic, representative and accountable. The **effective implementation of the UN Secretary-General's reforms**, including implementation on the ground and across UN agencies, funds and programmes, alongside the revitalisation of the UN General Assembly, is essential for **a more flexible and efficient UN**. That is why the EU will continue to be at the **forefront in pushing for reform**, as well as for the **sustainable financing of the UN**, and will promote its effective implementation to achieve results.
5. Today, the EU is a point of reference for the global network in support of effective multilateralism. In this endeavour, we are investing in new partnerships to support the multilateral agenda in the most effective, strategic and flexible way, while remaining true to the rules and principles of the UN Charter. In an evolving multilateral context, we need to build bridges and broaden dialogue. The trilateral AU-EU-UN cooperation is an example of effective multilateralism in action, a new paradigm of joining forces with international and regional actors to address global challenges.

6. The EU will stand united in promoting the UN, its principles and goals, speaking with one voice and will strengthen its capacity as a global player on the multilateral scene. EU unity is essential in this regard to maximise our influence in support of our common values. The strong presence of EU Member States on the UN Security Council as well as on the Human Rights Council will contribute to a positive momentum. The role of the EU and its Member States, who collectively are the single largest contributor to the UN, should help facilitate this process.
7. 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 74th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, will focus on the following three interlinked and mutually reinforcing priorities:

I. CONFLICT PREVENTION, PEACE AND SECURITY

II. A COMMON POSITIVE AGENDA

III. ENGAGEMENT ON GLOBAL CHALLENGES

I. CONFLICT PREVENTION, PEACE AND SECURITY

8. In times of growing geo-strategic competition, we have to tackle new challenges to global peace. The increasing intensity and complexity of crises worldwide endanger the lives of millions, cause unparalleled levels of forced displacement and put human rights at risk. Climate change acts as a threat multiplier, with serious implications for peace and security across the globe. In the face of more complex, violent and protracted conflicts, the EU will strengthen its role as a global provider of peace and security.

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

9. **Conflict prevention** is a critical tool to respond to these challenges. We should sharpen the focus of our collective engagement and galvanise joint efforts. Both the EU and the UN have made conflict prevention a strategic goal, and must now deliver on its implementation. The EU-UN dialogue on conflict prevention will be instrumental to bring real change on the ground by further operationalising preventive efforts, peacebuilding and the sustaining peace agenda, including Responsibility to Protect (RtoP). Linking early warning to early action is essential to mitigate the risks of outbreak and recurrence of conflicts. Conflict prevention will also remain at the heart of our joint actions to make peace operations and crisis management more effective and sustainable. We will continue to vigorously support and strengthen **mediation** efforts with the UN at the forefront of a surge in diplomacy for peace. The meaningful inclusion of women and youth is crucial for effective conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding. The EU will explore ways to strengthen the UN Peacebuilding Commission, an important platform for Member States to engage in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace, including through its enhanced interaction with the UN Security Council. The EU will also further strengthen the trilateral cooperation with the UN and the World Bank to help countries affected by conflict to plan for and implement a quick and sustainable recovery.
10. UN peacekeeping also needs our continued attention. The EU and its Member States joined the UN Secretary General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative and renewed their political commitment to peacekeeping operations in view of making them fit for the future. Success now depends on our collective determination to implement these commitments, particularly through political and financial support. EU Member States together contribute to one-third of the UN peacekeeping budget, which is more than any other global leader.

11. The EU's strong commitment to the Action for Peacekeeping initiative will continue to be reflected throughout the reinforced **EU-UN strategic partnership on peace operations and crisis management**. The implementation of the new set of priorities (2019-2021) is based on our respective added values and strengths, building on our significant achievements and synergies. The majority of EU missions and operations are deployed in the same theatre as UN missions. We will continue close cooperation with UN missions and operations on the ground, working to ensure complementarity of efforts, as well as mutually beneficial sharing of resources wherever possible. Promoting the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda will remain at the heart of our engagement to enhance coherence and integration of gender perspective throughout our cooperation. We will continue to advance the Youth, Peace and Security agenda recognizing the crucial role that youth plays in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The protection of civilians must be at the core of peace operations.

12. Partnerships with regional organisations are central to the UN's peace and security architecture. Our cooperation with and support for African-led peace operations is a joint contribution to regional and global peace and security. The African Union is the EU's key partner in this endeavour. Sustaining peace can only be achieved through an inclusive and integrated approach, rooted in broad, deep and durable regional and international partnerships, which the EU will foster and support.

II. A COMMON POSITIVE AGENDA

13. The EU will continue to demonstrate leadership in advancing our common positive agenda. The EU stands for its founding values and will continue to partner with others to promote and defend them. In times where some countries are calling the universality of human rights into question and civil society space is shrinking, a strong engagement in the **promotion and protection of human rights** will be at the core of the EU's partnership with the UN. The EU will continue to be a leading player in multilateral human rights fora and will actively promote the UN Human Rights system. Stepping up partnerships with governmental and non-governmental actors – including civil society and the private sector – is critical to the EU's continuous commitment to protecting and promoting respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law, civil society space, sustainable development and peace, as well as fighting impunity for human rights violations and abuses. Accountability for violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law is essential to rebuild post-conflict societies and ensuring lasting peace.
14. The EU will continue to foster a positive human rights narrative and will promote the sharing of successful human rights initiatives by states and other actors building on the cross-regional EU-led "Good Human Rights Stories" initiative that was launched last year. The EU will continue to engage actively in global efforts to achieve gender equality, the full enjoyment of all human rights by all women and girls and their empowerment, recognising the need to oppose firmly the pushback against women's and girls' rights. The EU reiterates its commitment to promote and protect the rights of the child. Mainstreaming human rights and integrating the gender perspective throughout the work of the UN will remain a key priority. It is also vital that the EU continues to support the UN Secretary-General's efforts to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. The EU will seek greater synergies between the work of the Human Rights Council in Geneva and that of UN General Assembly and the Security Council in New York. The EU will continue to support a strong and efficient Human Rights Council, as part of the wider UN reform, while protecting the Council's achievements and recognising its unique role and added value in promoting and protecting human rights around the world, as well as its preventive potential.

15. This is a critical year for sustainable development and climate action at the UN level. The **Sustainable Development Goals Summit** on 24-25 September 2019 will be a timely opportunity to reinvigorate political momentum for achieving the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development as well as the synergies with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Accelerated action is an overarching EU priority and essential to drive forward the implementation of this plan of action at all levels of governance, for People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership for the world's current and future generations. The SDGs Summit is a crucial moment to move forward the necessary transformation towards sustainable development, building on the positive spirit of the Agenda. The EU will act as an alliance-builder towards an ambitious outcome of the Summit with the aim of achieving the SDGs, eradicating poverty and leaving no one behind. The EU welcomes the UNGA High-level meeting on Universal Health Coverage that will launch new efforts to provide access for all to affordable, inclusive and resilient health systems. The EU will play an active role in the review and reform of the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) to be initiated in the UN General Assembly in autumn 2019. The EU and its Member States reiterate their commitment to supporting sustainable development through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda both domestically and across the world, alongside national efforts, in partnership with all relevant actors.

16. **Climate change** is the defining issue of our times. The EU recognises that the current level of efforts is largely insufficient to achieve the global ambition the Parties subscribed to in the Paris Agreement. It is a matter of extreme urgency to strengthen the global response and take decisive action, including on the implementation of international agreements, as informed by the latest scientific findings reported by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The EU welcomes the Summit called by the UN Secretary General on 23 September 2019 "A Race We Can Win. A Race We Must Win" as an important opportunity to demonstrate transformative action by all actors working together and to push for more ambitious climate action. The synergies between climate action and the implementation of the SDGs as well as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development should be highlighted in both the Climate Action Summit and the SDGs Summit. We must send the signal to stakeholders and people around the world that the international community is serious about devoting substantial efforts to addressing climate change and that this opportunity should not be missed. We are determined to help raise global ambition and support implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions leading the way to accelerated climate action on all fronts. We will continue to work closely with partners in the areas of adaptation and means of implementation, recognising their importance in reaching the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement. We strongly support the recently created Climate Security Mechanism to address the impacts of climate change on stability and security around the world. In this regard, we recognise the need for better tools for early warning and early intervention in fragile contexts.

17. Along with climate change, the global decline in **biodiversity** is a current threat to humanity. The coming year should see successful delivery on key international environment negotiations on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, including work building up to the Leaders' Summit on Biodiversity in UNGA in September 2020. The EU will continue to strengthen international ocean governance and will engage with partners in preparing the 2020 UN Ocean Conference as well as in the elaboration of a Treaty 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)**. The EU will continue to engage constructively in the UN process towards a **Global Pact for the Environment** in line with the recommendations of the open-ended working group.
18. The EU will further enhance its diplomatic engagement on **sustainable water management** as a tool for peace, security and stability and will foster cooperative approaches to address related transboundary challenges.

III. ENGAGEMENT ON GLOBAL CHALLENGES

19. In today's ever more globalised world, global challenges need global solutions. Mega-trends, such as increased human mobility and rapidly developing new technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, are shaping our future. The combined effects of globalisation and technological, environmental and demographic change are transforming the world of work at an unprecedented pace and scale and present challenges and opportunities for the future of work. These transformative changes call for decisive action, greater solidarity and stronger partnerships in view of a fair globalisation and a better and more sustainable future for all with full respect for human rights.

20. No country can address **migration and forced displacement** on its own, whether in Europe or elsewhere in the world. The EU is working with partners – countries of origin, transit and destination as well as international organisations – to jointly address these challenges, including in the framework of the UN. The EU will continue to pursue its comprehensive approach to migration and forced displacement, including to address irregular migration, through the building of effective, sustainable and tailor-made partnerships and closer cooperation between humanitarian and development actors, as well as with civil society, aiming at harnessing and strengthening the resilience and self-reliance of both the host communities and the forcibly displaced, including internally displaced persons. The strong relationship with the UN in the context of trilateral AU-EU-UN cooperation has helped to address the situation of migrants and refugees in Libya.
21. The EU-UN humanitarian partnership, anchored in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, has proven its worth over the years. We will continue building upon our shared commitment towards **preserving the humanitarian space and improving the humanitarian response system**. Protecting civilians, ensuring respect for international humanitarian law, and providing needs-based assistance, in accordance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, will remain the cornerstone of our engagement. In this pivotal period, marked by the 70th anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, the EU and the UN will build upon our partnership in supporting a renewed commitment to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law, as well as ensuring that counterterrorism measures and sanctions do not impede principled humanitarian assistance and comply with international law, in particular international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law. The EU will continue to advocate the prevention of and response to gender-based violence in emergencies.

22. The EU will continue to support the growing opportunities that **digitalisation**, emerging technologies and Artificial Intelligence are creating for the digital economy and sustainable development, while also addressing the security risks they may pose. The EU will promote human-centric digital transformation as an instrument to address global challenges, as well as to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, including for the future of work and education. The EU will engage in following up on the report of the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel to advance digital cooperation, building on the consultations already started with the EU Global Tech Panel. Effective and inclusive digital cooperation among Governments, the private sector, civil society, academia, the technical community, social partners and other stakeholders is instrumental to ensure a safe and inclusive digital future for all, in line with international human rights law. The EU will be a strong supporter of cooperation in the broader UN system on security, technology, sustainable development and diplomacy.
23. In order to buttress the rules-based international order, the EU will promote the full application of existing international law to cyberspace. It will support the development and implementation of voluntary non-binding norms of responsible State behavior as well as regional confidence building measures as enshrined in the reports by the UN Group of Governmental Experts unanimously endorsed by the UN General Assembly. In this context, the EU welcomes the establishment of the new UN Group of Governmental Experts and an open-ended working group (OEWG), it will actively engage in these two processes. The EU will promote the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime as the reference framework for cooperation in addressing cybercrime and will continue to support concerted efforts to build capacities in this regard.

24. **Counterterrorism (CT) and preventing/countering violent extremism (P/CVE)** continue to be high priorities for the EU. The EU is committed to multilateral cooperation to address the global threat of terrorism in full compliance with the rule of law and international law, including human rights law and international humanitarian law. The UN Global CT Strategy, the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, as well as relevant UN Security Council and UNGA resolutions are at the core of EU CT and P/CVE efforts. The EU will promote full implementation of the UN Global Counterterrorism Coordination Compact and closer cooperation with the UN in the priority areas for 2018-2020 identified in the EU-UN Framework on Counterterrorism. The EU will support the strengthening of cooperation between the UN and the Global Counterterrorism Forum. The EU attaches great importance to a holistic approach to tackle terrorism by empowering multi-agency approaches to prevent radicalisation; preventing the dissemination of terrorist content online and promoting credible alternative narratives; strengthening law enforcement, judicial cooperation and information exchange as well as anti-money laundering and countering terrorist financing. The EU underlines the importance of prosecuting returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) while paying special attention to the situation of accompanying women and children. The EU also emphasises the need to cut off the sources of terrorism financing, to enhance resilience and to provide comprehensive assistance to the victims of terrorism.

25. The EU reiterates its full support for the integrity of the international **non-proliferation and disarmament architecture**. The EU will continue to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, including in particular ballistic missiles, and will further intensify efforts to ensure that effective measures are taken to tackle other disarmament issues related to nuclear, chemical, biological, conventional arms and to export control. In the coming year, the EU will particularly focus on working towards a successful outcome of the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). As we reflect on the many achievements under the NPT in its fifty years of existence, the EU will uphold and preserve the NPT as a key multilateral instrument for international peace, security, and stability, and promote its universalisation and full implementation. While recognizing space as a driver for sustainable development, the EU will promote safety and security in outer space. In this regard, the EU believes that there could be value in agreeing on a voluntary instrument establishing standards of responsible behavior in line with existing international law. The EU will engage to end the protracted stalemate at the Conference on Disarmament.
26. The EU remains committed to effective arms control. The EU recalls that the two nuclear weapon States with the largest arsenals carry a special responsibility in the area of arms control and nuclear disarmament. In this context, we attach the highest importance to the New START Treaty. The EU will continue encouraging the United States and the Russian Federation to seek further reductions to their arsenals. The EU will encourage initiatives that can contribute to dialogue, confidence-building, transparency, verification, reporting and risk reduction, as well as missile launch notifications.

27. The EU will support all efforts aimed at ensuring that all those responsible for the use of chemical weapons are held to account, in particular through supporting the work of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and securing a positive outcome at the November 2019 Conference of States Parties. The entry into force and the universalisation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as well as universal adherence to and effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and of The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCoC) remain top priorities for the EU as do universalisation and strengthening the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and building operational capabilities for the UN Secretary-General's Mechanism (UNSGM). The EU will also work towards a successful outcome of the 4th Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. We will implement our new Strategy against illicit firearms, small arms and light weapons (SALW). We will continue to support efforts towards better implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540, as a key element of the international non-proliferation architecture.
28. In light of these long-standing commitments, the EU has decided to become a supporter of four actions on the UN Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, including on promoting the entry into force of the CTBT and commencing immediate negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT).

Empowering a strong and effective UN

29. It is our collective responsibility to work towards a more peaceful, secure and prosperous world for present and future generations. That is why we will continue to invest in a **strong and effective UN**, so that it can play its role as the backbone of the multilateral system. The EU, together with its Member States, will strengthen partnerships, promote human rights and the rule of law, and support peace, security, democracy and sustainable development for all.