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#### **OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

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Subject: EU priorities at the United Nations during the 77th United Nations General Assembly, September 2022 - September 2023  
- Council conclusions (18 July 2022)

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Delegations will find in the annex the Council Conclusions on EU priorities at the United Nations during the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly, September 2022 – September 2023, as approved by the Council at its 3889<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 18 July 2022.

**Council Conclusions on EU Priorities at the United Nations  
during the 77<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly,  
September 2022 – September 2023<sup>1</sup>**

**I. Setting the scene – WHY?**

1. Today, as the world faces one of the greatest challenges to global peace and security – Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine – upholding the rules-based international order founded on the UN Charter is more important than ever. It comes on top of existing geopolitical fractures and crises such as COVID-19 or climate change. Threats to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of any State, under any pretext, are a threat to us all and cannot be tolerated. To allow this to go unchallenged would mean accepting an international order based on the use of force.
  
2. Russia’s unjustifiable, unprovoked and illegal war of aggression is damaging the rules-based international order, the global economy, and global food security in ways which harm all countries. In the face of this affront to humanity, the EU and its Member States recall the binding character of the UN Charter in its entirety – peace and security, human rights, gender equality, human dignity, equal rights of large and small nations – and stress the universality of the UN’s founding principles. The EU reaffirms its conviction that the major challenges of our time, by their nature and global scope, cannot be addressed by countries acting alone but must be tackled together.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document the use of ‘EU’ does not prejudge whether the competence lies with ‘EU’, the ‘EU and its Member States’ or exclusively with ‘Member States’.

3. The world's strong response to this flagrant breach of the UN Charter sends a powerful message - multilateralism and the rules-based international order matter and such use of force should have no place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The UN has been responsive and adaptive in the face of this crisis by deploying and enhancing presence where needed. This senseless war causing massive devastation, destruction, and human suffering must end now. Together with partners, the EU and its Member States will spare no effort to make the world a safer place to live for all – in Europe and beyond – by defending democracy, human rights, the rule of law and ensuring peace and prosperity.
4. As the world was beginning to heal from the pandemic, Russia's unjustifiable, unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine has thrown it into even more uncertain times. Russia's war against Ukraine is producing devastating effects on a world already suffering from COVID-19 and climate change. Countries that have been struggling to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and to make progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) now face further challenges – looming global crises in food, energy, and finance.
5. Now more than ever is the time to demonstrate solidarity and to show that multilateralism works in times of crisis. The impacts of Russia's aggression are global and affect people in all corners of the world, with particularly dramatic effects on those in the most vulnerable situations. Multilateral actors - the United Nations, International Financial Institutions, the G7 and the G20 - should come together and put forward robust multilateral solutions to address the negative impacts and root causes of the interlinked crisis. We must act now – to avoid social unrest and further instability in many parts of the world. The EU will engage with the UN's Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance (GCRG) in this regard. The EU and its Member States have taken multiple initiatives aiming at mitigating the severe effects of the global food crisis and will continue to engage with all partners with a view to alleviate the consequences in particular, but not only, to address food insecurity and malnutrition as well as rising humanitarian needs.

6. As a fundamental test of the rules-based international order, Russia's war in Ukraine has exposed some significant gaps in global governance and yet again underlined the need to modernise and reform the United Nations in light of deepening geopolitical fractures. We should harness the historic opportunity provided by the UN process on "Our Common Agenda" to introduce global governance reforms, so that the UN-centred multilateral system is fit for tomorrow's world and delivers better on our shared global commitments. The EU will be partnering with all relevant actors to this end - in the spirit of a truly inclusive and networked multilateralism.

## **II. "Our Common Agenda" – defining our way forward- WHAT?**

### ***1. Ensuring peace and prosperity***

7. The United Nations as the sole organisation that brings all countries together should continue to promote dialogue as the best means to reach sustainable solutions to conflicts in all parts of the world. In the face of rising levels of violent conflict as well as threats to use force around the world, repeated violations of the UN Charter and international law, coupled with a pervasive culture of impunity, there is a need for a new and stronger approach to peace and security, anchored in human rights and fundamental principles of international law. Russia's ability to hamper an effective response by the UN Security Council to its own aggression against Ukraine shows that the toolbox at our disposal is not fit to address the magnitude of challenges the world is facing.

*a) New Agenda for Peace*

8. Today we need an ambitious “New Agenda for Peace” – one that advances a comprehensive and integrated approach and addresses the current and future challenges and threats to peace and security, while accelerating the implementation of the women, peace and security as well as youth, peace and security agendas. We need to ensure that the UN Security Council as the main body for international peace and security can fulfil its role in the face of increasing geopolitical tensions and rivalries. The recently adopted initiative creating a standing mandate for the UN General Assembly to be convened automatically every time a veto has been cast in the UN Security Council is an important contribution to increasing transparency and accountability at the UN. The EU lends its full support to the initiative on the suspension of veto powers in the UN Security Council in cases of mass atrocities.
  
9. The “New Agenda” should put a stronger focus on prevention, through the full use of the UN Secretary-General’s diplomatic toolbox, including strengthening mediation capacities, and be coherent with peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts at all levels. We need to ensure that UN peacekeeping missions are more effective and efficient, in line with the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) agenda and the A4P+ implementation plan, and are guided by viable political strategies, so that they can contribute to the advancement of political solutions to conflicts, anchored in human rights. In a similar vein, unlocking the full potential of the Peacebuilding Commission, and strengthening its advisory, convening and bridging role remains key in supporting peace efforts around the world. The role of the Peacebuilding Commission as a platform to attract political commitment from governments and major donors towards peacebuilding and conflict prevention objectives can be strengthened further. The UN Peacebuilding Fund needs to be adequately, predictably and sustainably funded, and assessed contributions could offer a crucial addition in this regard.

10. We need to be better equipped to tackle new threats and challenges. The “New Agenda” will require strengthening cooperation to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism, transnational crime, human trafficking, hybrid attacks that include the instrumentalisation of migrants and refugees, as well as cyber-related risks in full compliance with international law, including human rights law, a more determined commitment to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, reinforcing global governance for the peaceful, secure and sustainable use of outer space, and strengthening our foresight capacity allowing us to prevent, respond swiftly and manage crisis situations. The EU will also work with partners towards a global strategy for countering foreign information manipulation and interference.
11. The EU will work towards upholding the multilateral framework for disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, which has come under increasing pressure following Russia’s unprovoked and unjustified war against Ukraine. International peace and security depend on respect for international law by all UN Member States and the international community as a whole. Strengthening the multilateral framework is key to preventing further deterioration of the global security situation.
12. Advancing disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control will be a vital part of the “New Agenda for Peace”. The EU will work to strengthen, implement, and universalise the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The EU remains firmly committed to promoting universalisation and full implementation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The EU will continue to support the multilateral instruments against chemical and biological weapons, in order to uphold the international legal prohibition of such weapons, and to ensure there can be no impunity for those who use them. The EU will also continue to support and strengthen conventional instruments as well as the multilateral export control regimes. The EU will further address emerging challenges including those related to lethal autonomous weapons systems, advocate responsible military use of new technologies and promote responsible behaviours and prevention of the militarisation of and an arms race in outer space.

*b) Leaving no one behind*

13. Our efforts to maintain peace and security are closely interlinked with our ability to address other global challenges – to end poverty, reduce inequalities and injustice, tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation, to promote global health, gender equality, universal social protection and decent work for all, to uphold human rights, democratic principles, and to promote the rule of law and accountability. With less than a decade until 2030 and with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) being further hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic, the “triple planetary crisis”, and the global impacts of Russia’s war of aggression, we need to get on track before it is too late. Our top priority is to strengthen resilience against future shocks and to ensure a sustainable, equitable and inclusive recovery. In that regard the EU will be particularly attentive in ensuring that the consequences of the Russian aggression do not undermine the progress on the Sustainable Development Goals nor on the pandemic recovery. The fast-growing global food insecurity and malnutrition that we are witnessing today is a stark reminder of the need to foster sustainable food systems and climate resilience, particularly in vulnerable regions. The 2030 Agenda remains our roadmap, and we must accelerate its implementation. We need to turn this crisis into an opportunity to build momentum for the implementation of the SDGs in order to leave no one behind. As crises grow in intensity and complexity, greater collaboration and synergies among humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors, in line with their respective mandates, and with meaningful engagement of civil society and other actors, remain crucial to ensure an effective collective response.

14. The EU's Global Gateway is an important contribution to these efforts. With Global Gateway, the EU has put forward an ambitious strategy to tackle the most pressing global challenges, boosting smart, clean and secure infrastructure development in digital, energy and transport sectors, strengthening health, quality education and research systems across the world, and thus contributing to the implementation of the SDGs. The EU will promote resilient and financially sustainable connectivity investments and inclusive and transparent partnerships in that regard. Our new strategy will increase investments promoting democratic values, high standards, and good governance and will allow our partners to develop their societies and economies with lasting benefits for local communities. The EU will remain closely engaged in supporting sustainable urban development globally, pursuing the delivery of the New Urban Agenda.
15. A strong social contract is essential for people to live a decent life, and enabling all to participate in society, as promised in the 2030 Agenda. The EU supports the UN Secretary-General's proposal for a renewed social contract that encompasses a strong social and economic dimension, including social protection, decent work and quality education. Rebuilding the social contract through a comprehensive approach based on human rights is key to overcome mistrust between States, citizens and other stakeholders and build social cohesion and solidarity as well as an enabling environment for civil society.
16. The full implementation of the UN Development system reform and continued progress towards a reinforced UN 'delivering as one' is crucial for delivering the 2030 Agenda in a more integrated, coherent, efficient and results-driven manner. The empowered UN Resident Coordinators play an important role in this regard. The need for a predictable and sustainable long-term financing solution for the Resident Coordinator System remains important.



*c) Human rights and the rule of law*

17. Far too many people are left behind when it comes to the enjoyment of human rights. Human rights, whether civil and political, or economic, social and cultural, are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. They belong to everyone, everywhere without distinction of any kind. Respecting, protecting and fulfilling all rights of all people, in the spirit of the universal values that underpin a fair, free and sustainable society, is in the interest of everyone. The EU will continue to vigorously promote and defend the universality and indivisibility of human rights, gender equality, democracy, good governance and the rule of law and anti-corruption. We will also continue to support and protect civil society space and human rights defenders. The EU will support the Secretary-General's new vision of the rule of law that puts people at the centre of the justice system. The EU will continue to strongly oppose all forms of discrimination including on grounds of sex, race, ethnic or social origin, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, disability, age, sexual orientation, and gender identity. The EU reiterates its commitment to equality and non-discrimination and to the entitlement of all persons to enjoy the full range of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

18. The EU will advocate for all women's and girls' full enjoyment of all human rights, equal, full, effective and meaningful leadership and participation as well as facilitating women's economic empowerment, ensuring inclusion of young women's and girls' voices and their role as agents of change. We will not accept any effort to undermine fundamental freedoms or existing international human rights obligations and will continue to denounce human rights violations and abuses wherever they occur. The EU will continue to place the prevention and elimination of all forms of sexual and gender-based violence at the centre of its efforts. The EU condemns the use of sexual and gender-based violence, including as a weapon of war. In an ever more unstable world, marred by protracted violence and conflicts, the protection of civilians, including women and children in armed conflicts, remains a priority for the EU. The EU will address new emerging risks for human rights, including hybrid threats, technological developments, climate change and environmental degradation, and the continuing consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.
19. 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 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), and the outcomes of their review conferences, and remains committed to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in this context. Having that in mind, the EU reaffirms its commitment to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence. The EU further stresses the need for universal access to quality and affordable comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, education, including comprehensive sexuality education, and health-care services.

20. “Our Common Agenda” provides an important framework to mainstream human rights across all UN pillars. The EU will make all efforts to put human rights at the centre of the UN agenda and will promote a strengthened global system for human rights by building deeper alliances with partners. We will continue to advocate effective delivery by the UN Human Rights system and its independence as well as sustainable and adequate funding.
21. We must also strengthen transitional justice and accountability for serious violations and abuses of human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law, including through the International Criminal Court, and advance our work towards a Convention on the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity. The EU remains a steadfast supporter of the International Criminal Court and will continue to call for the universal ratification of the Rome Statute and for full cooperation with the ICC. The full respect for international human rights law and international humanitarian law, the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality as well as safe, rapid and unimpeded access of humanitarian actors to affected populations remain crucial. There can be no impunity for perpetrators of international crimes. The EU will remain a vocal defender of human rights and international humanitarian law, and will advocate unrestricted access to international human rights mechanisms. The effective implementation of the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ agenda should also contribute to this effort.

#### *d) Education*

22. Access to inclusive and equitable quality education is not only a fundamental human right but also essential to progress on all SDGs. It carries tremendous transformative power for a sustainable, just, inclusive, more equal and resilient world and recovery including by promoting gender equality in and through education. The pandemic has further constrained access to quality education, especially in the developing world and in particular in countries affected by conflicts and humanitarian emergencies, exacerbating pre-existing educational inequalities. The digital divide has further impacted education systems. This unprecedented global learning crisis is having a devastating impact on the rights of children and young people and has implications for peace, social cohesion and future prosperity.
23. The EU is strongly committed to supporting education at all levels, strengthening systems through increased evidence-based investments, focusing on equity and inclusion, in particular girls' education, and on teachers and improved learning outcomes. It is urgent to increase domestic and international financing for education with a focus on low income and fragile countries, and to enhance efficiency of policies and collaboration of actors in education planning and system strengthening. The EU's new initiative on digital agenda and education launched at the UN Human Rights Council will contribute to inclusive and equal access to the use of new and emerging technologies for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights, including through ensuring access to digital education worldwide. There is an urgent need to promote better education and life-long learning opportunities for all learners, to advance learning and skills development for enhanced employability, to support teachers' professional development at all levels and to ensure digital learning and education for sustainable development. We must ensure that the upcoming Transforming Education Summit will be truly transformative in all these areas in order to promote equitable access to quality education for current and future generations. It will provide an important opportunity to bring human development and education at the core of the global agenda towards 2030 and beyond.

## ***2. Preparing better for the future***

24. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has caused heightened instability and increased risks of fragmentation of the international community exacerbated by the increasingly severe socioeconomic consequences of the conflict. Food insecurity, limited access to energy and raw materials due to trade disruptions, as well as macro-economic repercussions such as high inflation and rising debt levels are affecting many countries worldwide. The EU will contribute to mitigate the most immediate consequences of this crisis and will work with partner countries to build long-term resilience to such shocks.

### ***a) Strengthening global health security and preparedness***

25. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed gaps in the world's ability to respond rapidly to global health crises and highlighted the need for a stronger and more inclusive global health architecture, with a central role for the World Health Organisation (WHO). The key lesson learnt from the pandemic is that the current multilateral framework for global health is no longer fit for purpose and we need to invest considerably in global health security capacity in order to be better prepared in the future. Beyond fighting the current pandemic and vaccinating the world, while ensuring timely, affordable and equitable global access to vaccines, the EU's ultimate goal remains to advance Universal Health Coverage and build strong and resilient health systems in partner countries in line with the One Health approach.

26. The EU will continue to be a driving force in the negotiations towards a legally binding convention, agreement or other international instrument to strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness and response within the framework of WHO. To break the cycle of panic and neglect, we need smart investments that deliver collaboration and coordinated, collective action. The new Pandemic agreement will be a game changer by providing an overarching framework to this end. The EU is looking forward to working with all partners in order to achieve an ambitious outcome. It is equally important to ensure sustainable financing for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response in order to avoid a repetition of the devastating health and socio-economic impact of COVID-19 in the future. The EU welcomes the establishment of a new Financial Intermediary Fund to this end.

*b) Addressing the “triple planetary crisis”*

27. The “triple planetary crisis” of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution” constitute an existential threat for people and the planet and must be tackled with the strongest sense of urgency – they jeopardize sustainable development, deepen existing vulnerabilities, undermine human rights and global peace. The latest report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warns of the irreversible impacts of global warming, noting that climate change could soon overwhelm our and nature’s ability to adapt – unless we rapidly lower emissions. The international conference Stockholm+50 called for a strong political will to urgently accelerate the implementation of commitments for a healthy planet and to engage in systemic transition, to address the triple crisis and to achieve the SDGs. Global food systems transformation in line with the UN Food Systems Summit commitments will also be key in this regard.

28. We must collectively follow up and fully implement the commitments from Glasgow and ensure higher ambition at the next COP in Egypt. Countries need to present more ambitious climate plans for 2030 and credible targets and plans for 2050. We must align all financial flows both with the goal of reaching net-zero around mid-century as well as with the Glasgow agreement on the collective doubling of adaptation finance in order to achieve a balance between climate mitigation and adaptation efforts. We must also align all financial flows and investments with global biodiversity objectives, also considering transnational organised crime as a source of biodiversity loss, to be agreed in an ambitious post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework this year. We will work towards a legally binding global agreement to fight plastic pollution.
29. We must support the UN Secretary-General in his efforts to phase out new fossil fuel exploration and fossil fuel subsidies. It is imperative that we accelerate our efforts for a resilient and just green energy transition worldwide. We must participate in the conclusion of further Just Energy Transition Partnerships with partner countries from the Global South, at and beyond COP27. We need to engage with the UN-Energy Plan of Action Towards 2025 and the related Energy Compacts in helping governments and stakeholders to achieve their energy pledges.
30. Oceans can be a source of renewable energy, low emission food and innovation and are essential to achieving the 2030 Agenda. Concluding the negotiations on an international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) this year will be a key achievement for securing benefits for humanity.

31. Water is of strategic importance for sustainable development, as well as for peace and security and the fulfilment of human rights. Water needs to be addressed across sectors and trans-boundaries. The EU is committed to ensuring an ambitious and actionable outcome at the UN 2023 Water Conference with the aim of accelerating the achievement of water-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda, including through the establishment of a new UN special envoy for water.

*c) Digital inclusion and connectivity*

32. The digital space is rich in opportunities, but also carries risks of technology such as artificial intelligence being misused, or of cyber-attacks, cybercrime and disinformation. We need to promote an open, free, global, stable and secure cyberspace where human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law fully apply. It is our task to make the digital transformation work for all – to protect the digital commons as a global public good, achieve affordable, meaningful connectivity and digital inclusion, close the digital divide, and ensure respect and protection of human rights online as we do offline. The EU will continue to protect and promote online civic space, data protection, the right to privacy, and to counter state-sponsored limitations of access to information, including internet shutdowns. The EU will work with partners to implement the Declaration for the Future of the Internet to support an open, free, global, interoperable, reliable and secure Internet.



33. The Global Digital Compact as proposed by the UN Secretary-General can serve as an enabler and accelerator for the implementation of the SDGs, with the prospect of further advances in other areas. The EU looks forward to engaging constructively towards establishing a truly human centric Global Digital Compact – one that ensures a human rights-based approach to the digital space and the use of related technologies, addresses both its opportunities and risks in all its dimensions and breaks down silos. The outcome should be a stronger, inclusive, human rights-based and multi-stakeholder digital governance, including international organisations, governments, civil society, academia and the private sector, to the benefit of all. The EU expects the UN Tech Envoy to help uphold and improve the current multi-stakeholder model of internet governance and to ensure compliance with the human rights-based approach to digital technologies across the UN system.

*d) Youth empowerment*

34. Mobilising young people's innovative potential for sustainable development and more democratic, inclusive and peaceful societies is key to implementing the 2030 Agenda and renewing solidarity between generations. The EU will contribute to youth empowerment by strengthening youth capacities, addressing inequalities and offering opportunities to drive sustainable development in their communities, countries and globally. We will show leadership and promote meaningful, diverse and effective youth engagement both within the UN and beyond, their full and active participation in public and political life at all levels as an essential aspect of democracy, good governance and the respect of human rights. A stronger voice for youth, especially for young women and girls in global decision-making is key to enable them to act as multipliers, contributing to more sustainable policies, restoring trust in public institutions and building a better future for all – greener, more inclusive and digital. The establishment of the UN Youth Office will be a concrete step towards achieving these objectives.

### III. Towards a UN 2.0- HOW?

35. The more complex global environment reaffirms the need for a UN that is ready for the future. We cannot address 21st century problems with a 20th century toolbox. We need to move from simply reacting to global challenges and crises, such as conflicts, food insecurity or climate change, to preventing and better anticipating crises and major trends, such as digital and green transitions or demographic change, and embedding our assessments in our strategic planning and policy-making. To achieve this and looking forward to the Summit of the Future in 2023, the UN needs to adapt in line with the UN Secretary General’s vision for “Our Common Agenda” and deliver as “One UN” across the system.
36. To make the UN more effective, we need to develop new capabilities that promote agility, integration and cohesion. The EU supports upgrading the UN by investing in the “Quintet of Change”, with a stronger focus on data, results-based management, and strategic foresight. These capabilities are foundational to the concept of UN 2.0 towards a more future-oriented UN system. We also support the proposal for an Emergency Platform to improve our collective approach to crisis management. The EU welcomes the proposal to re-establish the UN Secretary-General’s Scientific Advisory Board as a core element of strengthening decision-making in the UN and its role as a source of reliable data and evidence, and stands ready to assist with its own science advisory bodies. The Summit of the Future will be the right occasion to take stock and advance on this transformation process. The EU looks forward to engaging with all actors across the board towards a visionary and ambitious Summit outcome.

37. A UN 2.0 also means an organisation that is sustainably funded and that is more inclusive, transparent and accountable. Actors like civil society, human rights defenders, social partners, youth, parliaments, the private sector, academia as well as regional organisations – all add a distinct perspective and strengthen our decision-making. This increases the UN’s legitimacy and helps demonstrate to our citizens why multilateralism and the UN are the best way to deliver results to the benefit of all. The EU and its Member States will remain at the forefront of promoting a more modern, efficient, transparent and accountable UN. We will continue to support these transformative changes, so that the United Nations is properly equipped for future challenges and opportunities.

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