The European Union is an “indispensable partner of the United Nations”, the 28-nation bloc has announced as it sets out its priorities at the United Nations and 74th General Assembly (UNGA 74), which opens on September 17, 2019 in New York.

“At a time of fragmentation and polarisation, the strong EU-UN partnership in advancing and shaping the multilateral agenda is needed more than ever,” the European Council set out in conclusions which outlined its priorities.

World leaders will gather in September at the UN Headquarters to boost action on climate change and accelerate progress on sustainable development. In addition to the general debate, they will take part in a series of summits, including on Climate Action and Sustainable Development Goals.

The EU highlighted its “profound commitment to effective multilateralism” as it outlined three
priorities for the upcoming gathering:

- Conflict prevention, peace and security
- A common positive agenda
- Engagement on global issues

Conflict prevention, peace and security

“In times of growing geo-strategic competition, we have to tackle new challenges to global peace,” the EU said as it outlined its first key priority: conflict prevention, peace and security. The bloc will strengthen its role as a global provider of peace and security, the council conclusions said, as increasing intensity and complexity of crises worldwide endangers the lives of millions.

“Climate change acts as a threat multiplier, with serious implications for peace and security across the globe,” the EU added. It announced that conflict prevention is a critical tool, and UN peacekeeping needs its continued attention.

A common positive agenda

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 conclusions noted in its second priority: a common positive agenda. The EU said it will actively promote the UN Human Rights system and continue to engage in global efforts to achieve gender equality.

The EU announced the upcoming SDG summit, to be held on September 24-25, will be a “timely opportunity to reinvigorate political momentum for achieving the 2030 Agenda.” The summit will allow world leaders and other stakeholders to demonstrate how they intend to accelerate action towards achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals established at the UN in 2015 to transform our world.
EU Member States also welcomed the summit on Climate Action to be held on September 23, recognising that “the current level of efforts is largely insufficient”. It said that the summit can be a signal to the world that the “international community is serious about … addressing climate change.” The EU also noted that the global decline in biodiversity is a current threat to humanity.

Engagement on global challenges

The international community must work together to find global solutions to global challenges, the EU said as it outlined its third priority: engagement on global challenges. The EU highlighted its engagement in areas of migration and forced displacement; humanitarian assistance; digitalisation; cybersecurity and counterterrorism.

EU member states also reiterated their full support for the integrity of the international non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. They also outlined their commitment to effective arms control as well as to supporting efforts aimed at ensuring those responsible for using chemical weapons are held to account.

The EU also announced it will become a supporter of four actions on the UN Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament.

Empowering a strong and effective UN

The EU will continue to invest in a strong and effective UN, the conclusions noted, outlining that the EU will be at the forefront in pushing for reform and sustainable financing.

“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,” the EU said.

EU “indispensable partner” of UN, bloc announces as it sets out UNGA priorities
Tuesday, 30 July 2019 16:22

To find out more about the UN General Assembly: https://www.un.org/en/ga/

To learn more about the 5 summits taking place in September: https://www.un.org/en/summits2019/