



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 27 May 2008

9978/08

**PESC 662
CONUN 59
ONU 40
COHOM 64
CODUN 10
CONOP 33
COTER 38
COJUR 4**

"I/A" ITEM NOTE

From : Political and Security Committee
To : Coreper / Council

Subject : EU priorities for the 63rd United Nations General Assembly

1. The Working party on UN affairs (CONUN) examined at several occasions the above-mentioned draft document and reached an agreement on the text using a written procedure.
2. PSC endorsed the text on 27 May.
3. Coreper is therefore invited to advise the Council to adopt as an "A" item the EU priorities for the 63rd General Assembly of the United Nations as they appear in the Annex.

**EU PRIORITIES
FOR THE 63rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

1. The EU is fully **committed to the effective multilateralism** with a central role of the United Nations. Our goal is to work towards an effective multilateral system based on international law as well as the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.
2. Strengthening the United Nations is a European priority; therefore, the EU remains convinced that the reforms of the UN system, agreed upon at the World Summit 2005, need now to be advanced in an expeditious manner. The EU remains committed to engage actively in a constructive and genuine dialogue with the whole UN membership to advance further the agenda.
3. The EU recognizes the need to pursue the reform of the main UN bodies, among them the General Assembly, ECOSOC and the Security Council with a view to enhancing the representativeness, transparency and effectiveness of the system.
4. The EU underlines its commitment to management reform, and will continue to actively work towards progress and tangible results in important reform areas such as i.e. human resources management, governance and oversight, and result based management. Securing further progress on management reform is crucial in order to provide the Secretary-General with foundation for enhancing management, accountability, efficiency and transparency of the Organisation.

5. The EU is committed to providing the UN with sufficient resources to fulfil its unique role in addressing international issues of peace and security, development and the promotion of human rights and will continue to make a fair contribution to the costs of the UN. Nevertheless, the EU is concerned about the increase of the UN Regular Budget, the continued use of add-ons and the piecemeal approach of the last budget process. The EU will engage constructively in UNGA 63 to promote sound financial management and proper budgetary discipline.
6. The **process of reforming UN's operational activities** remains a long-standing priority for the EU. Continued efforts are needed to strengthen the UN's capacity to deliver "as One" in the area of development. Consideration should also be given to the cross-cutting issues of gender equality, sustainable development and human rights. The EU supports the proposed pragmatic bottom-up approach and believes that lessons from the pilot countries should play an important part of the overall reform efforts at the centre.
7. The EU underlines its support to the **mainstreaming of gender issues** into all aspects of the United Nations activities through appropriate financing and benchmarks. The EU fully supports the efforts to move forward on strengthening the capabilities of the UN system in the area of gender through a consolidated gender entity with a strong mandate and sufficient and predictable funding, in order to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women.
8. Promoting and strengthening the **rule of law** at the national and international levels remains one of the EU's priorities. The EU fully supports the inclusion of this issue on the agenda of the 6th Committee at its current and forthcoming sessions. The EU emphasizes the need to **provide all the necessary assistance and support to the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group, supported by the Rule of Law Unit in the Executive Office of the Secretary General, under the leadership of DSG**, in order to ensure that they can properly fulfil their important functions of system wide coordination and quality control, as well as strategic planning in the fields of rule of law and transitional justice, and work without financial, technical and administrative obstacles. The EU supports the efforts to finance the Unit from the UN Regular Budget.

9. **Strengthening the current system of international environmental governance (IEG)**, thus enabling the Organization to adequately react to the growing environmental challenges is very important for the EU. We believe that efforts need to be taken to strengthen the current system, while keeping in mind the need to focus on the broader transformation of the IEG system.
10. The EU strongly supports the **three main pillars of the UN** – Security, Development and Human Rights - that are **interconnected and mutually reinforcing**.

1. PEACE AND SECURITY

1.1. Conflict prevention, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding Architecture

11. There is a need to further strengthen the operational capacity of the United Nations in the field of peace and security activities. The EU fully supports the UN endeavours in the area of preventive diplomacy and mediation. The EU recognises the need for an adequate strengthening and structuring of the Office of Military Affairs within the DPKO to improve planning and command and information management at the strategic level. The EU acknowledges the intrinsic link between security, political, development and humanitarian aspects in peacekeeping operations. The EU supports the UN in building capacity especially in the field of logistics and training to effectively address the multidimensional character of modern peacekeeping operations. We encourage the **implementation of the UN peacekeeping doctrine** as essential for the efficiency and effectiveness of current and future UN peacekeeping operations. The EU will pay particular attention to the possible interaction and synergies between the UN peacekeeping operations and the EU operations in order to maximize their impact on the ground. In this context we would like to underline the importance of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and UNSCR 1612 on Children and Armed Conflict.

12. The EU will continue to emphasize **post-conflict activities of the UN**, including environmental dimensions of conflicts and disasters. The EU will also continue to address the issue of the transition from relief to development. To this end, the EU will cooperate closely with the UN system to further consolidate the role of the **Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)**. We support the PBC in reaching its full potential and encourage to further develop its capacity and capability. The EU also stresses the importance of providing the Peacebuilding Fund with sufficient resources. Furthermore the EU emphasizes the role of the UN in Security Sector Reform (SSR) and is ready to cooperate with the UN in this field. In order to avoid duplications with similar work done in other organisations, creation of a mechanism of coordination between the EU and the UN would be valuable.

1.2. International Justice

13. Ending impunity for the most serious international crimes remains high on the agenda of the EU. The EU firmly believes that there can be no impunity for the most serious crimes and that there can be no longstanding peace without justice. The EU remains committed to cooperating with the **International Criminal Court (ICC)** as well as to supporting the universality and integrity of the **Rome Statute**. The EU will continue its active engagement in preparing the Review Conference in a way that it would send out a strong signal with the objective of strengthening the Court and contributing to the universality of justice.

14. The EU takes note of the target dates for the completion strategies for the ICTR and the SCSL tribunals in 2010 and the revised target date for the ICTY of 2011, and will fully engage in the discussion on their completion strategies and residual issues.

1.3. Fight against terrorism

15. The EU stands ready to further support the UN endeavours in complementing and building on existing UN **counter-terrorism** arrangements and contribute to a deeper international consensus on the normative framework. In this regard, the EU is fully committed to do its part to **implement the UN Global Strategy** in cooperation with all other member states of the UN, and, in doing so, giving support to the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force. During the first formal review since the adoption of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by the GA in 2006, the EU will play a constructive role in the endeavour of implementing this Strategy. In our view, the main focus should be on implementation, thus avoiding a revision of the text. At the same time, the EU hopes that the personnel and financial basis of Counter-Terrorism activities within the UN will be strengthened. The EU also places high priority on the **swift conclusion of negotiations on Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism** with efforts from all sides and hopes that the negotiations on the draft Convention could be finalized before the end of this year. The EU will continue to work toward ensuring that all international efforts against terrorism are carried out in accordance with international law, including international humanitarian law, refugee law and human rights law.

1.4. Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-proliferation

16. The EU remains committed to **international disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation** and to the **strengthening of the international treaty system** and will continue to work to reinforce this system in accordance with the objectives set out in the EU Security Strategy and the EU Strategy against Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Proliferation. The EU will work actively to secure progress at the First Committee.

17. In this context, the EU will continue to contribute to a successful outcome of the **Non-Proliferation Treaty** (NPT) Review process and stresses the need for full implementation of the NPT regime, including i.a. the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The EU underlines the importance of the work undertaken in the context of the UNSCR 1540 Committee, to prevent the proliferation of WMD, their means of production and delivery and supports its worldwide implementation. The EU welcomes the successful outcome of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) review conference.

The EU continues to support the implementation of the UN Programme of Action on **small arms and light weapons** and supports the range of action to counter the uncontrolled spread of conventional weapons including small arms and their ammunition. The EU notes the widespread international support for an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and strongly supports the continuation of the UN process towards the finalisation of a legally binding international Arms Trade Treaty. The EU also welcomes the deliberations of the UN Group of Governmental Experts on stockpiles of conventional ammunition in surplus and looks forward to continued work with regard to this important issue. The EU advocates further progress in adopting legally binding commitments with regard to cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians.

The EU is committed to the development of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space.

1.5. Responsibility to protect

18. The EU will continue to promote and improve compliance with international humanitarian law in a visible and consistent manner. In addition the EU attaches great importance to the **implementation of the Responsibility to protect**, a concept that was endorsed at the 2005 World Summit, and emphasizes the need for further consideration of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity in the General Assembly and the Security Council. The EU welcomes the upgrading of the mandate of Mr Deng, as Special Representative for the Prevention of Genocide and the appointment of Mr Edward Luck as Special Adviser looking at the Responsibility to Protect.

2. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Climate Change

19. Tackling **climate change** is an area where key priorities of the United Nations and the EU meet. The EU strongly supports the central role of the United Nations in **the creation of a post-2012 global climate agreement** and has been actively participating in the comprehensive global negotiations to be completed no later than by the end of 2009, when UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP 15 will be held in **Copenhagen, Denmark**. The EU emphasizes the importance of achieving further progress at the UNFCCC COP 14 which will take place in **Poznan, Poland**, in December 2008.

20. Climate change threatens to undermine the United Nation's Charter principles on development and peace and security. As last year's UN Human Development Report shows, if we fail to tackle climate change, the Millennium Development Goals will not be achieved, global poverty will increase and development will go into reverse. Therefore climate change can no longer be seen exclusively as an environmental challenge. Consideration should also be given to other dimensions, such as its consequences for development, food production, security and trade. **Negative effects of climate change** could increase insecurity, social tensions and possibly lead to political instability. The EU will therefore pay particular attention to a more integrated approach to climate change, involving other relevant policy dimensions in the debate as well, taking into account the special needs of those who will suffer the most from climate change.

2.2. Millennium Development Goals

21. The EU remains strongly committed to the implementation of the **Millennium Declaration and the MDGs**. Moreover, the EU welcomes the upcoming High Level Meeting on Africa's Development Needs to be held on 22 September 2008 and the upcoming United Nations High Level Meeting on the MDGs to be held on 25 September 2008.

The EU will continue to play an active role in encouraging additional efforts by the international community, both developed and developing countries towards achievement of the MDGs, particularly in Africa. The level of progress thus far is not adequate and varies greatly by goal and by region. Further efforts are needed to address these disparities in progress. In this respect the EU also stresses the need for a genuine and constructive dialogue with the United Nations partners.

2.3. Financing for development

22. The EU will honour its commitments regarding financing for development. The Monterrey Consensus remains the foundation of the global partnership for development and the EU intends to work constructively towards achieving a positive outcome of the **Conference to review the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus** which will take place in **Doha** from 29 November to 2 December 2008. This outcome should recognise that climate change is making development efforts more difficult and more expensive. Moreover, the EU is dedicated to working with all development partners to improve the quality and impact of its aid.

2.4. Food Security

23. The EU is deeply concerned about the steep surge in food prices, including most basic staples. This can plunge millions of the world's poor into deeper poverty, increase risks of malnutrition, jeopardise spending on health and education and the achievement of Millennium Development Goals and increase social and political tensions. In responding to the crisis, the EU also looks to the UN system organizations to work together to develop a coherent global strategy and action plan, covering both humanitarian and development objectives.

2.5. Humanitarian assistance

24. The EU will seek to strengthen coordination of humanitarian assistance through both country specific and thematic resolutions, and along the lines of the EU Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.

The EU underscores the need to ensure that those in need of protection and assistance are able to access it.

3. HUMAN RIGHTS

25. In the year of the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the promotion and protection of human rights remain one of the key priorities of the EU Foreign and Security Policy and External action in general. The EU strongly supports all UN mechanisms for protection and promotion of human rights and pays special attention to the improvement of the efficiency of these mechanisms. **The EU will continue to actively promote the integration of human rights in all aspects of the work of the United Nations.**
26. **The Human Rights Council (HRC)**, after adoption of its institutional package, continues to play a crucial role. The EU will continue to work actively in order to further consolidate the Council and enhance its role within the UN system. One of key elements in this process is proper and efficient realization of the **Universal Periodic Review** and the preservation and strengthening of all special mechanisms, including country specific and thematic mandates. The EU supports the consolidation of the human rights-based approach to development in the UN programming.
27. The EU will continue to support the **General Assembly Third Committee** as the body with universal membership that can also effectively promote the implementation of human rights standards and further develop thematic issues of global importance, among which the follow up to the GA resolution on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty is a significant priority. The Third Committee remains a relevant forum to address also country specific issues and the EU will continue to act accordingly.
28. The EU fully supports the **Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights** and its independence in promoting and protecting human rights throughout the world and will work towards ensuring such independence.