

DRAFT**First informal consultation on the draft resolution on the Modalities for the UNGASS on the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic****Monday 31.8.2020****Intervention by the EU and its MS**

- A. Recall the letter to the Secretary General in June 2020 which stressed considerations of importance to the European Union and its Member for the UNGASS:
- In light of the unprecedented and multifaceted nature of the Covid-19 crisis, the UNGASS's agenda should encompass the wide range of challenges entailed by the pandemic and the need to **protect, recover, and rebuild better**;
 - we support the participation in this meeting of the **Heads of all relevant UN agencies and bodies**;
 - in view of the vital role played by **non-state actors** in all aspects of the response – we call for the participation of other stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, without whom our objectives will not be attained;
 - **multilingualism** must be ensured.

B. With this in mind, make the following **initial remarks on the Zero Draft**.

Initial remarks at the first informal limited to the more important paragraphs:

- On OP 1, we consider that convening the UNGASS for 2 days is appropriate; with regard to the exact dates, we need some more time to consult capitals and will revert soonest; (Comment EUDEL: we consider that while the timing coincides with the committees, 5-6 Nov is a reasonable suggestion due to the urgency of the matter).
- On OP 3, and the relevant organisational arrangements, we welcome the structure proposed and would add the following:
 - (a) The opening should, in addition to the statements already foreseen in the zero draft, include **statements by Heads of relevant agencies**;
 - (b) the **time for the general debate** should be agreed on in advance, in order to ensure that it does not prolongue in a way that it limits the time for the interactive dialogue;
 - (c) For the third element of the arrangements - the scientific and expert panel - we suggest having a more **interactive dialogue** between political leaders; the scientific/expert community and civil society (propose wording at later stage);
 - (d) with regard to the content, the **human rights** impact of the crises must also be included;
- OP 3 (e) – the language in relation to the **participation of civil society** must be strengthened – refer in particular to the non-objection clause and footnotes 1 and 2.
 - Without the full contribution of civil society, our objectives cannot be attained. We cannot accept the exclusion of civil

- society from important discussions such as the ones on COVID-19 which will take place during this UNGASS.
- Note that the EU and its Member States, together with other delegations, have recently raised concern with the way that the non-objection clause is being applied in practice.
 - We have sought clarity about the reasons why certain entities are denied participation in a specific UN event (such as, the Ocean Conference), despite the relevance of their work to the event at stake. No clarity or explanation was forthcoming.
 - For this reason, insist on a better approach in this modalities resolution (cannot accept (i) that each MS has the possibility to object to any CSO; nor (ii) objections which do not trigger an obligation to provide concrete reasons or do not relate to specific criteria).
 - State that we will propose language in this regard.
- OP 4 is in line with what has been agreed for the HLW, and we are therefore willing to take on board without changes.