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From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

Subject: Climate Diplomacy - Council conclusions (18 February 2019)

Delegations will find attached the Council conclusions on Climate Diplomacy as adopted at the 3673rd meeting of the Council on 18 February 2019.

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON CLIMATE DIPLOMACY

The Council adopted the following Conclusions:

The urgency of raising global ambition, strengthening multilateralism, and the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement

1. Climate change is a direct and existential threat, which will spare no country. The world is already witnessing multiple devastating impacts of climate change, yet action to stem it remains insufficient. As the United Nations Secretary General has said, and, as unequivocally confirmed by the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 °C, the world is not moving fast enough to prevent irreversible and catastrophic climate disruption. In this context, it is a matter of extreme urgency to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change in the context of sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty. The European Union is therefore determined to help raise global ambition and lead the way on accelerated climate action on all fronts and recognises the severe implications that climate change poses to international security and stability.

2. The EU reaffirms its steadfast commitment to the Paris Agreement as the essential multilateral framework governing global action to deal with climate change. The Council congratulates the Presidency of the 24th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 24) for hosting a successful conference in Poland, and welcomes its positive outcome, the "Katowice Rulebook", which equips the Paris Agreement to serve as an effective, operational and transparent platform for tackling the most urgent of global challenges, and provides a strong momentum for all countries to move forward and to raise global climate ambition. The EU is ready to communicate or update its NDC by 2020, as agreed in Paris, taking into account the collective further efforts needed and actions undertaken by all Parties.

3. The EU is leading by example by turning its own ambitious commitments for 2030 into concrete action and legislation. Recognising the need for enhanced global ambition, the EU has also begun to map out its vision for pathways to the long-term transition to a climate neutral future, in accordance with the Paris Agreement. Our challenge is to achieve this goal, whilst ensuring a just transition for all, to leave no one behind.

4. The Council urges all countries to join in this necessary raising of global ambition, driven by the findings of the latest IPCC Report and the Talanoa dialogue, demonstrating renewed collective determination to achieve the Paris Agreement goals, notably to limit global warming to well-below 2°C, pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C.

5. Climate concerns us all: states, organisations, private sector, citizens and all stakeholders have a role to play. Concerted and transformative action must therefore extend to multiple levels of governance, with an essential role for non-state actors and regional and local governments in tackling climate change and implementing ambitious solutions on the ground. Likewise, continuing to mobilise and redirect the requisite finance from a variety of sources, including new contributors, will play a crucial role in the transition to low-emission and climate-resilient economies.

Climate, peace and security

6. The Council is convinced that climate change acts as a threat multiplier and increasingly as a threat in its own right, with serious implications for peace and security across the globe. The Council recognises that the poorest and those in most fragile and vulnerable situations are the most exposed and the least able to respond or adapt to climate change. On top of mitigation and adaptation, resilience building, food and nutrition security, disaster risk reduction, conflict prevention and sustainable development, notably sustainable demand side management and management and use of natural resources and nature-based solutions, are all basic pillars of climate change risk management. Integrating a security perspective within all of these processes, while ensuring inclusive participation, is fundamental in order to alleviate the destabilising impacts of climate change and its negative impact on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

7. The Council is deeply concerned by the deterioration of global biodiversity, the world's water resources and ecosystems and the growing threats posed by land degradation, water scarcity, water-related risks and extreme water events. The finding of the Arctic Council that the Arctic is warming at more than twice the global average is a particular concern resulting in serious global consequences. The Council recalls the EU's commitment to strengthen its support for the protection of the Arctic environment including by reducing air pollutants, notably black carbon. The Council supports comprehensive and concerted international efforts to address the water-related impacts of climate change in line with its conclusions of November 2018 on Water Diplomacy. The Council encourages taking climate action in favour of the ocean, including through coastal and marine nature-based solutions, within relevant long-term low emissions strategies. The Council underlines the importance of cross-border cooperation between member states and partner countries, notably on the assessment of transboundary environmental impacts as well as safety assessments, including nuclear safety.

8. The Council welcomes the High Level Event convened by the High Representative/ Vice President of the Commission on 22 June 2018, which highlighted both the urgency and importance of tackling the risks that climate change poses to security and peace. Participants testified to the many real and potential security threats deriving from climate change, and pointed to a collective responsibility to anticipate, prepare for and alleviate those impacts. The Council welcomes further events, building on existing initiatives such as the Planetary Security Initiative and the Budapest Water Summit 2019.

9. The Council invites the High Representative, the Commission and EU Member States to ensure that conflict prevention tools like EU conflict Early Warning System take into account the security challenges linked to adverse effects of climate change and environmental risk factors and strengthen the link between early warning and early action across policy areas, including risk and impact assessments and strategies from the field. The Council also invites EU security and defence actors to raise awareness of security risks related to climate change.

10. The Council welcomes the increased focus placed on the security implications of climate change in the United Nations Security Council, including through the dedicated debates held on 11 July 2018 and 25 January 2019, under the Presidencies of Sweden and the Dominican Republic respectively. The Council welcomes steps to strengthen such work across the UN structures, through a dedicated, initial mechanism, to address climate-related security risks. The Council continues to encourage the UNSC and the United Nations system to create a comprehensive information basis for the UNSC on climate-related security risks, to fully integrate short and long-term climate and environmental risk factors in the assessment and management of threats to peace and security, at country, regional and international levels, and to draw on the expertise of the whole UN system in order to find operational responses to these risks and strengthen UN missions on the ground, for example by reinforcing existing early warning mechanisms.

2019 as critical year for climate action, and sustainable development, at United Nations level

11. Further decisive action by all parties must urgently take place. The Council looks forward to the series of high-level events to support commitments to swift and ambitious global climate action throughout 2019. The July 2019 United Nations High Level Political Forum is an invaluable opportunity to underline the synergies between climate action and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as also demonstrated in the IPCC Special Report on 1.5°C, in particular the links between goals 13 and 16, and to promote their implementation. The EU also calls on all partners to join in making substantive and positive contributions to the United Nations Secretary General's Climate Summit 'A Race We Can Win. A Race We Must Win' in September 2019 – as well as to the Sustainable Development Goals Summit that will also be held at the opening of the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly. The EU considers the UN SG Climate Summit as an essential opportunity to mobilise political will to raise global ambition for the Paris Agreement goals and to demonstrate transformative action by governments and non-state actors.

12. Climate action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction must be mutually reinforcing. The EU looks forward to 2019 as the year of pushing further convergence – at both domestic and multilateral levels – between the Sustainable Development Goals and climate agendas. The EU calls on all partners to support the UN Secretary General's work to bring these tracks closer. The EU will continue to uphold, promote and protect human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of climate action.

13. The EU also remains committed to maximising the climate contribution from other relevant multilateral processes, calling notably on the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) to swiftly implement an effective Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA), while ensuring its environmental integrity, and agree on a long term goal at its next assembly. The EU also calls on the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to implement its initial greenhouse gas emission strategy consistent with the temperature goals of the Paris Agreement. The EU welcomes the entry into force of the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on 1 January 2019, contributing to the achievement of the goals of the Paris Agreement, and calls upon other parties to the Montreal Protocol to ratify this amendment as soon as possible.

A race we can all win: the EU's Long Term Strategy

14. The Council recognises that limiting global warming to well-below 2°C, pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C, requires rapid and far-reaching societal transformation, environment protection and economic transition occurring during the coming decades. The EU will submit to the UNFCCC an ambitious long-term strategy by 2020, striving for climate neutrality in line with the provisions of the Paris Agreement, and calls on all Parties to the Agreement to submit their long-term strategies on time.

15. The EU will continue to cooperate and to exchange experiences and best practices with its partners in accelerating ambitious and effective policy implementation and forward planning. The EU underlines the particular need for G20 economies, who account for some 80% of global emissions, to show leadership and come forward with ambitious long term strategies by 2020 in line with the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement to climate action. Climate action already constitutes an important part of cooperation with third countries and the EU will scale up its political dialogues and climate and energy diplomacy to focus on action and to encourage its strategic partners to accelerate transition to a climate neutral, circular and climate-resilient economy.

16. The Council notes that the necessary global transition away from fossil fuels will entail potentially significant shifts in geopolitical balance, which may have foreign and security policy implications for the EU as recently set out by the Global Commission on the Geopolitics of Energy Transformation. The Council therefore welcomes the European Commission's strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate-neutral economy - 'A Clean Planet for All'. The Council underlines the need to focus discussions on different pathways to achieve climate neutrality in line with the Paris Agreement. The Council recalls the importance of closely considering science and evidence-based indicators, whilst ensuring a just transition by taking due account of specific socio-economic circumstances, investing in innovative technological solutions, empowering citizens and non-state actors and aligning action in key areas such as energy and industrial policy, agricultural policy, research, and financial policy. The Council recalls that carbon pricing and fossil fuel subsidy reform are key steps in creating an enabling environment for making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards safe and sustainable low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development.

Further enhancing EU international climate cooperation and support

17. The Council invites the Commission, the High Representative and the Member States to ensure that EU climate action addresses the full range of challenges and impacts. Political dialogues at all levels and joint action plans need to encompass climate action. The High Representative and the Commission are encouraged to give the necessary consideration to climate action in the future programming of financial and technical cooperation with partner countries, including under the next Multiannual Financial Framework.

18. The EU and its Member States remain committed to continue scaling up the mobilisation of international climate finance, as part of the collective developed countries' goal to jointly mobilise USD 100 billion per year by 2020 through to 2025 for mitigation and adaptation purposes, from a wide variety of sources, instruments and channels, both public and private. They are committed to the Paris Agreement's goal of making financial flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas and climate resilient development in the context of the Commission's Action Plan: financing sustainable growth. The EU will continue its international efforts to ensure similar financial mobilisation from other partners and countries.

19. The EU and its Member States recognise the importance of measures and actions to adapt to the impacts of climate change, including strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability. Furthermore, it underlines the importance of cooperation with all partner countries on adaptation, particularly in Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) which are acutely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.
