

GOLDMAN SACHS GROUP INC

Form 424B2

September 28, 2018

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Registration Statement No. 333-219206

**The information in this preliminary pricing supplement is not complete and may be changed. This preliminary pricing supplement is not an offer to sell nor does it seek an offer to buy these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted.**

Subject to Completion. Dated September 27, 2018.

**GS Finance Corp.**

\$

Leveraged Buffered MSCI EAFE Index-Linked Notes due

guaranteed by

**The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.**

**The notes do not bear interest.** The amount that you will be paid on your notes on the stated maturity date (expected to be October 31, 2023) is based on the performance of the MSCI EAFE Index as measured from the trade date (expected to be October 26, 2018) to and including the determination date (expected to be October 26, 2023).

If the final index level on the determination date is greater than the initial index level (set on the trade date), the return on your notes will be positive and will equal the participation rate (expected to be between 1.14 and 1.24) *times* the index return. If the final index level declines by up to 30% from the initial index level, you will receive the face amount of your notes.

If the final index level declines by more than 30% from the initial index level, the return on your notes will be negative and will equal the index return *plus* 30%. **You could lose a significant portion of the face amount of your notes.**

To determine your payment at maturity, we will calculate the index return, which is the percentage increase or decrease in the final index level from the initial index level. At maturity, for each \$1,000 face amount of your notes, you will receive an amount in cash equal to:

if the index return is *positive* (the final index level is *greater than* the initial index level), the *sum* of (i) \$1,000 *plus* (ii) the *product* of (a) \$1,000 *times* (b) the participation rate *times* (c) the index return;

if the index return is *zero or negative* but *not below -30%* (the final index level is *equal to* the initial index level or is *less than* the initial index level, but not by more than 30%), \$1,000; or

if the index return is *negative* and is *below -30%* (the final index level is *less than* the initial index level by more than 30%), the *sum* of (i) \$1,000 *plus* (ii) the *product* of (a) the *sum* of the index return *plus 30% times* (b) \$1,000. You will receive less than the face amount of your notes.

**You should read the disclosure herein to better understand the terms and risks of your investment, including the credit risk of GS Finance Corp. and The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. See page PS-12.**

*The estimated value of your notes at the time the terms of your notes are set on the trade date is expected to be between \$910 and \$950 per \$1,000 face amount. For a discussion of the estimated value and the price at which Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC would initially buy or sell your notes, if it makes a market in the notes, see the following page.*

**Original issue date:** expected to be October 31, 2018      **Original issue price:** 100% of the face amount\*

**Underwriting discount:** % of the face amount\*      **Net proceeds to the issuer:** % of the face amount

\*The original issue price will be % for certain investors; see Supplemental Plan of Distribution; Conflicts of Interest on page PS-20.

**Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any other regulatory body has approved or disapproved of these securities or passed upon the accuracy or adequacy of this prospectus. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense. The notes are not bank deposits and are not insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any other governmental agency, nor are they obligations of, or guaranteed by, a bank.**

**Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC**

Pricing Supplement No.      dated      , 2018.

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The issue price, underwriting discount and net proceeds listed above relate to the notes we sell initially. We may decide to sell additional notes after the date of this pricing supplement, at issue prices and with underwriting discounts and net proceeds that differ from the amounts set forth above. The return (whether positive or negative) on your investment in notes will depend in part on the issue price you pay for such notes.

GS Finance Corp. may use this prospectus in the initial sale of the notes. In addition, Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC or any other affiliate of GS Finance Corp. may use this prospectus in a market-making transaction in a note after its initial sale. ***Unless GS Finance Corp. or its agent informs the purchaser otherwise in the confirmation of sale, this prospectus is being used in a market-making transaction.***

## **Estimated Value of Your Notes**

***The estimated value of your notes at the time the terms of your notes are set on the trade date (as determined by reference to pricing models used by Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC (GS&Co.) and taking into account our credit spreads) is expected to be between \$910 and \$950 per \$1,000 face amount, which is less than the original issue price. The value of your notes at any time will reflect many factors and cannot be predicted; however, the price (not including GS&Co.'s customary bid and ask spreads) at which GS&Co. would initially buy or sell notes (if it makes a market, which it is not obligated to do) and the value that GS&Co. will initially use for account statements and otherwise is equal to approximately the estimated value of your notes at the time of pricing, plus an additional amount (initially equal to \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per \$1,000 face amount).***

***Prior to \_\_\_\_\_, the price (not including GS&Co.'s customary bid and ask spreads) at which GS&Co. would buy or sell your notes (if it makes a market, which it is not obligated to do) will equal approximately the sum of (a) the then-current estimated value of your notes (as determined by reference to GS&Co.'s pricing models) plus (b) any remaining additional amount (the additional amount will decline to zero on a straight-line basis from the time of pricing through \_\_\_\_\_). On and after \_\_\_\_\_, the price (not including GS&Co.'s customary bid and ask spreads) at which GS&Co. would buy or sell your notes (if it makes a market) will equal approximately the then-current estimated value of your notes determined by reference to such pricing models.***

## **About Your Prospectus**

The notes are part of the Medium-Term Notes, Series E program of GS Finance Corp. and are fully and unconditionally guaranteed by The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. This prospectus includes this pricing supplement and

the accompanying documents listed below. This pricing supplement constitutes a supplement to the documents listed below, does not set forth all of the terms of your notes and therefore should be read in conjunction with such documents:

Product supplement no. 1.738 dated July 10, 2017

General terms supplement no. 1.734 dated July 10, 2017

Prospectus supplement dated July 10, 2017

Prospectus dated July 10, 2017

The information in this pricing supplement supersedes any conflicting information in the documents listed above. In addition, some of the terms or features described in the listed documents may not apply to your notes.

We refer to the notes we are offering by this pricing supplement as the offered notes or the notes. Each of the offered notes has the terms described below. Please note that in this pricing supplement, references to GS Finance Corp., we, our and us mean only GS Finance Corp. and do not include its subsidiaries or affiliates, references to The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., our parent company, mean only The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. and do not include its subsidiaries or affiliates and references to Goldman Sachs mean The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. together with its consolidated subsidiaries and affiliates, including us. The notes will be issued under the senior debt indenture, dated as of October 10, 2008, as supplemented by the First Supplemental Indenture, dated as of February 20, 2015, each among us, as issuer, The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., as guarantor, and The Bank of New York Mellon, as trustee. This indenture, as so supplemented and as further supplemented thereafter, is referred to as the GSFC 2008 indenture in the accompanying prospectus supplement. The notes will be issued in book-entry form and represented by a master global note.

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**Table of Contents****Leveraged Buffered MSCI EAFE Index-Linked Notes due****INVESTMENT THESIS**

You should be willing to forgo interest payments and risk losing a substantial portion of your investment in exchange for (i) between 1.14x and 1.24x leveraged upside participation if the underlier return is positive and (ii) a buffer against loss of principal in the event of a decline of up to 30% in the final underlier level relative to the initial underlier level.

You could lose a substantial portion of your investment if the underlier return is less than -30%.

**DETERMINING THE CASH SETTLEMENT AMOUNT**

At maturity, for each \$1,000 face amount, the investor will receive (in each case as a percentage of the face amount):

if the final underlier level is greater than 100% of the initial underlier level, 100% *plus* between 114% and 124% times the underlier return;

if the final underlier level is equal to or less than 100% of the initial underlier level but greater than or equal to 70% of the initial underlier level, 100%; or

if the final underlier level is less than 70% of the initial underlier level, 100% *minus* 1% for every 1% that the final underlier level has declined below 70% of the initial underlier level

**If the final underlier level declines by more than 30% from the initial underlier level, the return on the notes will be negative and the investor could lose a substantial portion of their investment in the notes.**

**KEY TERMS**

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Issuer:</b>          | GS Finance Corp.  |
| <b>Guarantor:</b>       | The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.   |
| <b>Underlier:</b>       | The MSCI EAFE Index (current Bloomberg symbol: MXEA Index )             |
| <b>Face Amount:</b>     | \$ in the aggregate; each note will have a face amount equal to \$1,000 |
| <b>Trade Date:</b>      | Expected to be October 26, 2018   |
| <b>Settlement Date:</b> | Expected to be October 31, 2018   |

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Determination Date:</b>        | Expected to be October 26, 2023  |
| <b>Stated Maturity Date:</b>      | Expected to be October 31, 2023  |
| <b>Initial Underlier Level:</b>   | To be determined on the trade date   |
| <b>Final Underlier Level:</b>     | The closing level of the underlier on the determination date   |
| <b>Underlier Return:</b>          | The <i>quotient</i> of (i) the final underlier level <i>minus</i> the initial underlier level <i>divided by</i> (ii) the initial underlier level, expressed as a positive or negative percentage |
| <b>Upside Participation Rate:</b> | Expected to be between 114% and 124%   |
| <b>Buffer Level:</b>              | 70% of the initial underlier level (equal to an underlier return of -30%)  |
| <b>Buffer Amount:</b>             | 30%  |
| <b>Buffer Rate:</b>               | 100%   |
| <b>CUSIP/ISIN:</b>                | 40056E3L0 / US40056E3L09   |

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| <b>Hypothetical Final Underlier Level (as Percentage of Initial Underlier Level)</b> | <b>Hypothetical Cash Settlement Amount (as Percentage of Face Amount)</b> |
|--|---|
| 200.000%   | 214.000%  |
| 175.000%   | 185.500%  |
| 150.000%   | 157.000%  |
| 125.000%   | 128.500%  |
| <b>100.000%</b>  | <b>100.000%</b>   |
| 95.000%  | 100.000%  |
| 90.000%  | 100.000%  |
| 85.000%  | 100.000%  |
| <b>70.000%</b>   | <b>100.000%</b>   |
| 65.000%  | 95.000%   |
| 50.000%  | 80.000%   |
| 25.000%  | 55.000%   |
| <b>0.000%</b>  | <b>30.000%</b>  |

\*assumes an upside participation rate set at the bottom of the upside participation rate range (between 114% and 124%)

**RISKS**

Please read the section entitled "Additional Risk Factors Specific to Your Notes" of this pricing supplement as well as the risks and considerations described in the accompanying prospectus dated July 10, 2017, in the accompanying prospectus supplement dated July 10, 2017, under "Additional Risk Factors Specific to the Underlier-Linked Notes" in the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738 dated July 10, 2017, and under "Additional Risk Factors Specific to the Notes" in the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734 dated July 10, 2017.

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**TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

(Terms From Pricing Supplement No. \_\_\_\_\_ Incorporated Into Master Note No. 2)

These terms and conditions relate to pricing supplement no. \_\_\_\_\_ dated \_\_\_\_\_, 2018 of GS Finance Corp. and The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. with respect to the issuance by GS Finance Corp. of its Leveraged Buffered MSCI EAFE Index-Linked Notes due \_\_\_\_\_ and the guarantee thereof by The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.

The provisions below are hereby incorporated into master note no. 2, dated August 22, 2018. References herein to this note shall be deemed to refer to this security in such master note no. 2, dated August 22, 2018. Certain defined terms may not be capitalized in these terms and conditions even if they are capitalized in master note no. 2, dated August 22, 2018. Defined terms that are not defined in these terms and conditions shall have the meanings indicated in such master note no. 2, dated August 22, 2018, unless the context otherwise requires.

**CUSIP / ISIN:** 40056E3L0/ US40056E3L09

**Company (Issuer):** GS Finance Corp.

**Guarantor:** The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.

**Underlier:** the MSCI EAFE Index (current Bloomberg symbol: MXEA Index), or any successor underlier, as it may be modified, replaced or adjusted from time to time as provided herein

**Face amount:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ in the aggregate on the original issue date; the aggregate face amount may be increased if the company, at its sole option, decides to sell an additional amount on a date subsequent to the trade date.

**Authorized denominations:** \$1,000 or any integral multiple of \$1,000 in excess thereof

**Principal amount:** On the stated maturity date, the company will pay, for each \$1,000 of the outstanding face amount, an amount, if any, in cash equal to the cash settlement amount.

**Cash settlement amount:**

if the final underlier level is *greater than* the initial underlier level, the *sum* of (1) \$1,000 *plus* (2) the *product* of (i) \$1,000 *times* (ii) the upside participation rate *times* (iii) the underlier return;

if the final underlier level is *equal to* or *less than* the initial underlier level but *greater than* or *equal to* the buffer level, \$1,000; or

if the final underlier level is *less than* the buffer level, the *sum* of (1) \$1,000 *plus* (2) the *product* of (i) \$1,000 *times* (ii) the buffer rate *times* (iii) the *sum* of the underlier return *plus* the buffer amount

**Initial underlier level (set on the trade date):**



**Final underlier level:** the closing level of the underlier on the determination date, subject to adjustment as provided in Consequences of a market disruption event or non-trading day and Discontinuance or modification of the underlier below

**Upside participation rate (set on the trade date):** expected to be between 114% and 124%

**Underlier return:** the *quotient* of (1) the final underlier level *minus* the initial underlier level *divided* by (2) the initial underlier level, expressed as a percentage

**Buffer level:** 70% of the initial underlier level

**Buffer rate:** 100%

**Buffer amount:** 30%

**Trade date:** expected to be October 26, 2018

**Original issue date (set on the trade date):** expected to be October 31, 2018

**Determination date (set on the trade date):** expected to be October 26, 2023, unless the calculation agent determines that a market disruption event occurs or is continuing on such day or such day is not a trading day. In that event, the determination date will be the first following trading day on which the calculation agent determines that a market disruption event does not occur and is not continuing. However, the determination date will not be postponed to a date later than the originally scheduled stated maturity date or, if the originally scheduled stated maturity date is not a business day, later than the first business day after the originally scheduled stated maturity date. If a market disruption event occurs or is continuing on the day that is the last possible determination date or such last possible day is not a trading day, that day will nevertheless be the determination date.

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**Stated maturity date (set on the trade date):** expected to be October 31, 2023, unless that day is not a business day, in which case the stated maturity date will be postponed to the next following business day. The stated maturity date will also be postponed if the determination date is postponed as described under **Determination date** above. In such a case, the stated maturity date will be postponed by the same number of business day(s) from but excluding the originally scheduled determination date to and including the actual determination date.

**Closing level:** for any given trading day, the closing level of the underlier or any successor underlier reported by Bloomberg Financial Services, or any successor reporting service the company may select, on such trading day for the underlier. As of the trade date, whereas the underlier sponsor publishes the official closing level of the underlier to six decimal places, Bloomberg Financial Services reports the closing level of the underlier to fewer decimal places.

**Constituent index:** any of the component country indices comprising the underlier.

**Trading day:** a day on which the underlier is calculated and published by the underlier sponsor

**Successor underlier:** any substitute underlier approved by the calculation agent as a successor underlier as provided under **Discontinuance or modification of the underlier** below

**Underlier sponsor:** at any time, the person or entity, including any successor sponsor, that determines and publishes the underlier as then in effect

**Underlier stocks:** at any time, the stocks that comprise any of the constituent indices as then in effect, after giving effect to any additions, deletions or substitutions

**Market disruption event:** With respect to any given trading day, any of the following will be a market disruption event with respect to the underlier:

a suspension, absence or material limitation of trading in underlier stocks constituting 20% or more, by weight, of the underlier or any constituent index on their respective primary markets, in each case for more than two consecutive hours of trading or during the one-half hour before the close of trading in that market, as determined by the calculation agent in its sole discretion,

a suspension, absence or material limitation of trading in option or futures contracts relating to the underlier, to any constituent index or to underlier stocks constituting 20% or more, by weight, of the underlier or any constituent index in the respective primary markets for those contracts, in each case for more than two consecutive hours of trading or during the one-half hour before the close of trading in that market, as determined by the calculation agent in its sole discretion, or

underlier stocks constituting 20% or more, by weight, of the underlier or any constituent index, or option or futures contracts, if available, relating to the underlier or any constituent index or to underlier stocks constituting 20% or more, by weight, of the underlier or any constituent index do not trade on what were the respective primary markets for those underlier stocks or contracts, as determined by the calculation agent in its sole discretion,

and, in the case of any of these events, the calculation agent determines in its sole discretion that such event could materially interfere with the ability of the company or any of its affiliates or a similarly situated person to unwind all or a material portion of a hedge that could be effected with respect to this note.

The following events will not be market disruption events:

a limitation on the hours or numbers of days of trading, but only if the limitation results from an announced change in the regular business hours of the relevant market, and

a decision to permanently discontinue trading in option or futures contracts relating to the underlier or any constituent index or to any underlier stock.

For this purpose, an absence of trading in the primary securities market on which an underlier stock, or on which option or futures contracts relating to the underlier or any constituent index or an underlier stock are traded will not include any time when that market is itself closed for trading under ordinary circumstances. In contrast, a suspension or limitation of trading in an underlier stock or in option or futures contracts, if available, relating to the underlier or any constituent index or to an underlier stock in the primary market for that stock or those contracts, by reason of:

a price change exceeding limits set by that market,

an imbalance of orders relating to that underlier stock or those contracts, or

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a disparity in bid and ask quotes relating to that underlier stock or those contracts, will constitute a suspension or material limitation of trading in that stock or those contracts in that market.

**Consequences of a market disruption event or a non-trading day:** If a market disruption event occurs or is continuing on a day that would otherwise be the determination date or such day is not a trading day, then the determination date will be postponed as described under Determination date above.

If the calculation agent determines that the closing level of the underlier that must be used to determine the cash settlement amount is not available on the postponed determination date because of a market disruption event, a non-trading day or for any other reason (except as described under Discontinuance or modification of the underlier below), the calculation agent will nevertheless determine the closing level of the underlier based on its assessment, made in its sole discretion, of the level of the underlier on that day.

**Discontinuance or modification of the underlier:** If the underlier sponsor discontinues publication of the underlier and the underlier sponsor or any other person or entity publishes a substitute underlier that the calculation agent determines is comparable to the underlier and approves as a successor underlier, or if the calculation agent designates a substitute underlier, then the calculation agent will determine the amount payable on the stated maturity date by reference to such successor underlier.

If the calculation agent determines that the publication of the underlier is discontinued and there is no successor underlier, the calculation agent will determine the amount payable on the stated maturity date by a computation methodology that the calculation agent determines will as closely as reasonably possible replicate the underlier.

If the calculation agent determines that the underlier, the underlier stocks or any constituent index or the method of calculating the underlier is changed at any time in any respect - including any split or reverse-split of the underlier and any addition, deletion or substitution and any reweighting or rebalancing of the constituent indices or of the underlier stocks and whether the change is made by the underlier sponsor under its existing policies or following a modification of those policies, is due to the publication of a successor underlier, is due to events affecting one or more of the underlier stocks or their issuers or is due to any other reason - and is not otherwise reflected in the level of the underlier by the underlier sponsor pursuant to the then-current underlier methodology of the underlier, then the calculation agent will be permitted (but not required) to make such adjustments in the underlier or the method of its calculation as it believes are appropriate to ensure that the final underlier level, used to determine the amount payable on the stated maturity date, is equitable.

All determinations and adjustments to be made by the calculation agent with respect to the underlier may be made by the calculation agent in its sole discretion. The calculation agent is not obligated to make any such adjustments.

**Calculation agent:** Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC ( GS&Co. )

**Tax characterization:** The holder, on behalf of itself and any other person having a beneficial interest in this note, hereby agrees with the company (in the absence of a change in law, an administrative determination or a judicial ruling to the contrary) to characterize this note for all U.S. federal income tax purposes as a pre-paid derivative contract in respect of the underlier.

**Overdue principal rate:** the effective Federal Funds rate



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The following table and chart are provided for purposes of illustration only. They should not be taken as an indication or prediction of future investment results and merely are intended to illustrate the impact that the various hypothetical underlier levels on the determination date could have on the cash settlement amount at maturity assuming all other variables remain constant.

The examples below are based on a range of final underlier levels that are entirely hypothetical; the underlier level on any day throughout the life of the notes, including the final underlier level on the determination date, cannot be predicted. The underlier has been highly volatile in the past meaning that the underlier level has changed considerably in relatively short periods and its performance cannot be predicted for any future period.

The information in the following examples reflects hypothetical rates of return on the offered notes assuming that they are purchased on the original issue date at the face amount and held to the stated maturity date. If you sell your notes in a secondary market prior to the stated maturity date, your return will depend upon the market value of your notes at the time of sale, which may be affected by a number of factors that are not reflected in the table below, such as interest rates, the volatility of the underlier, the creditworthiness of GS Finance Corp., as issuer, and the creditworthiness of The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., as guarantor. In addition, the estimated value of your notes at the time the terms of your notes are set on the trade date (as determined by reference to pricing models used by GS&Co.) is less than the original issue price of your notes. For more information on the estimated value of your notes, see [Additional Risk Factors Specific to Your Notes – The Estimated Value of Your Notes At the Time the Terms of Your Notes Are Set On the Trade Date \(as Determined By Reference to Pricing Models Used By GS&Co.\) Is Less Than the Original Issue Price Of Your Notes](#) on page PS-12 of this pricing supplement. The information in the table also reflects the key terms and assumptions in the box below.

**Key Terms and Assumptions**

|                           |                                    |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Face amount               | \$1,000                            |
| Upside participation rate | 114%                               |
| Buffer level              | 70% of the initial underlier level |

|               |      |
|---------------|------|
| Buffer rate   | 100% |
| Buffer amount | 30%  |

Neither a market disruption event nor a non-trading day occurs on the originally scheduled determination date

No change in or affecting any of the underlier stocks or the method by which the underlier sponsor calculates the underlier

Notes purchased on original issue date at the face amount and held to the stated maturity date

Moreover, we have not yet set the initial underlier level that will serve as the baseline for determining the underlier return and the amount that we will pay on your notes at maturity. We will not do so until the trade date. As a result, the actual initial underlier level may differ substantially from the underlier level prior to the trade date.

For these reasons, the actual performance of the underlier over the life of your notes, as well as the amount payable at maturity may bear little relation to the hypothetical examples shown below or to the historical underlier levels shown elsewhere in this pricing supplement. For information about the historical levels of the underlier during recent periods, see The Underlier Historical Closing Levels of the Underlier below. Before investing in the offered notes, you should consult publicly available information to determine the levels of the underlier between the date of this pricing supplement and the date of your purchase of the offered notes.

Also, the hypothetical examples shown below do not take into account the effects of applicable taxes. Because of the U.S. tax treatment applicable to your notes, tax liabilities could affect the after-tax rate of return on your notes to a comparatively greater extent than the after-tax return on the underlier stocks.

The levels in the left column of the table below represent hypothetical final underlier levels and are expressed as percentages of the initial underlier level. The amounts in the right column represent the hypothetical cash settlement amounts, based on the corresponding hypothetical final underlier level, and are expressed as percentages of the face amount of a note (rounded to the nearest one-thousandth of a percent). Thus, a hypothetical cash settlement amount of 100.000% means that the value of the cash payment that we would deliver for each \$1,000 of the outstanding face amount of the offered notes on the stated maturity date would equal 100.000% of the face amount of a note, based on the corresponding hypothetical final underlier level and the assumptions noted above.

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| <b>Hypothetical Final Underlier Level</b>         | <b>Hypothetical Cash Settlement Amount</b> |
|---|--|
| <b>(as Percentage of Initial Underlier Level)</b> | <b>(as Percentage of Face Amount)</b>      |
| 200.000%  | 214.000%                                   |
| 175.000%  | 185.500%                                   |
| 150.000%  | 157.000%                                   |
| 125.000%  | 128.500%                                   |
| <b>100.000%</b>                                   | <b>100.000%</b>                            |
| 95.000%   | 100.000%                                   |
| 90.000%   | 100.000%                                   |
| 85.000%   | 100.000%                                   |
| <b>70.000%</b>                                    | <b>100.000%</b>                            |
| 65.000%   | 95.000%                                    |
| 50.000%   | 80.000%                                    |
| 25.000%   | 55.000%                                    |
| <b>0.000%</b>                                     | <b>30.000%</b>                             |

If, for example, the final underlier level were determined to be 25.000% of the initial underlier level, the cash settlement amount that we would deliver on your notes at maturity would be 55.000% of the face amount of your notes, as shown in the table above. As a result, if you purchased your notes on the original issue date at the face amount and held them to the stated maturity date, you would lose 45.000% of your investment (if you purchased your notes at a premium to face amount you would lose a correspondingly higher percentage of your investment). **If the final underlier level were determined to be 0.000% of the initial underlier level, you would lose 70.000% of your investment in the notes.**

The following chart shows a graphical illustration of the hypothetical cash settlement amounts that we would pay on your notes on the stated maturity date, if the final underlier level were any of the hypothetical levels shown on the horizontal axis. The hypothetical cash settlement amounts in the chart are expressed as percentages of the face amount of your notes and the hypothetical final underlier levels are expressed as percentages of the initial underlier level. The chart shows that any hypothetical final underlier level of less than 70.000% (the section left of the 70.000% marker on the horizontal axis) would result in a hypothetical cash settlement amount of less than 100.000% of the face amount of your notes (the section below the 100.000% marker on the vertical axis) and, accordingly, in a loss of principal to the holder of the notes.



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The cash settlement amounts shown above are entirely hypothetical; they are based on market prices for the underlier stocks that may not be achieved on the determination date and on assumptions that may prove to be erroneous. The actual market value of your notes on the stated maturity date or at any other time, including any time you may wish to sell your notes, may bear little relation to the hypothetical cash settlement amounts shown above, and these amounts should not be viewed as an indication of the financial return on an investment in the offered notes. The hypothetical cash settlement amounts on notes held to the stated maturity date in the examples above assume you purchased your notes at their face amount and have not been adjusted to reflect the actual issue price you pay for your notes. The return on your investment (whether positive or negative) in your notes will be affected by the amount you pay for your notes. If you purchase your notes for a price other than the face amount, the return on your investment will differ from, and may be significantly lower than, the hypothetical returns suggested by the above examples. Please read **Additional Risk Factors Specific to the Underlier-Linked Notes – The Market Value of Your Notes May Be Influenced by Many Unpredictable Factors** on page S-32 of the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738.

Payments on the notes are economically equivalent to the amounts that would be paid on a combination of other instruments. For example, payments on the notes are economically equivalent to a combination of an interest-bearing bond bought by the holder and one or more options entered into between the holder and us (with one or more implicit option premiums paid over time). The discussion in this paragraph does not modify or affect the terms of the notes or the U.S. federal income tax treatment of the notes, as described elsewhere in this pricing supplement.

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*We cannot predict the actual final underlier level or what the market value of your notes will be on any particular trading day, nor can we predict the relationship between the underlier level and the market value of your notes at any time prior to the stated maturity date. The actual amount that you will receive at maturity and the rate of return on the offered notes will depend on the actual initial underlier level and upside participation rate, which we will set on the trade date, and the actual final underlier level determined by the calculation agent as described above. Moreover, the assumptions on which the hypothetical returns are based may turn out to be inaccurate. Consequently, the amount of cash to be paid in respect of your notes on the stated maturity date may be very different from the information reflected in the table and chart above.*

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**Table of Contents****ADDITIONAL RISK FACTORS SPECIFIC TO YOUR NOTES**

*An investment in your notes is subject to the risks described below, as well as the risks and considerations described in the accompanying prospectus, in the accompanying prospectus supplement, under Additional Risk Factors Specific to the Notes in the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734 and under Additional Risk Factors Specific to the Underlier-Linked Notes in the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738. You should carefully review these risks and considerations as well as the terms of the notes described herein and in the accompanying prospectus, the accompanying prospectus supplement, the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734 and the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738. Your notes are a riskier investment than ordinary debt securities. Also, your notes are not equivalent to investing directly in the underlier stocks, i.e., the stocks comprising the underlier to which your notes are linked. You should carefully consider whether the offered notes are suited to your particular circumstances.*

**The Estimated Value of Your Notes At the Time the Terms of Your Notes Are Set On the Trade Date (as Determined By Reference to Pricing Models Used By GS&Co.) Is Less Than the Original Issue Price Of Your Notes**

The original issue price for your notes exceeds the estimated value of your notes as of the time the terms of your notes are set on the trade date, as determined by reference to GS&Co.'s pricing models and taking into account our credit spreads. Such estimated value on the trade date is set forth above under Estimated Value of Your Notes ; after the trade date, the estimated value as determined by reference to these models will be affected by changes in market conditions, the creditworthiness of GS Finance Corp., as issuer, the creditworthiness of The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., as guarantor, and other relevant factors. The price at which GS&Co. would initially buy or sell your notes (if GS&Co. makes a market, which it is not obligated to do), and the value that GS&Co. will initially use for account statements and otherwise, also exceeds the estimated value of your notes as determined by reference to these models. As agreed by GS&Co. and the distribution participants, this excess (i.e., the additional amount described under Estimated Value of Your Notes ) will decline to zero on a straight line basis over the period from the date hereof through the applicable date set forth above under Estimated Value of Your Notes . Thereafter, if GS&Co. buys or sells your notes it will do so at prices that reflect the estimated value determined by reference to such pricing models at that time. The price at which GS&Co. will buy or sell your notes at any time also will reflect its then current bid and ask spread for similar sized trades of structured notes.

In estimating the value of your notes as of the time the terms of your notes are set on the trade date, as disclosed above under Estimated Value of Your Notes , GS&Co.'s pricing models consider certain variables, including principally our credit spreads, interest rates (forecasted, current and historical rates), volatility, price-sensitivity analysis and the time to maturity of the notes. These pricing models are proprietary and rely in part on certain assumptions about future events, which may prove to be incorrect. As a result, the actual value you would receive if you sold your notes in the secondary market, if any, to others may differ, perhaps materially, from the estimated value of your notes determined by reference to our models due to, among other things, any differences in pricing models or assumptions used by others. See Additional Risk Factors Specific to the Underlier-Linked Notes The Market Value of Your Notes May Be Influenced by Many Unpredictable Factors on page S-32 of the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738.

The difference between the estimated value of your notes as of the time the terms of your notes are set on the trade date and the original issue price is a result of certain factors, including principally the underwriting discount and

commissions, the expenses incurred in creating, documenting and marketing the notes, and an estimate of the difference between the amounts we pay to GS&Co. and the amounts GS&Co. pays to us in connection with your notes. We pay to GS&Co. amounts based on what we would pay to holders of a non-structured note with a similar maturity. In return for such payment, GS&Co. pays to us the amounts we owe under your notes.

In addition to the factors discussed above, the value and quoted price of your notes at any time will reflect many factors and cannot be predicted. If GS&Co. makes a market in the notes, the price quoted by GS&Co. would reflect any changes in market conditions and other relevant factors, including any deterioration in our creditworthiness or perceived creditworthiness or the creditworthiness or perceived creditworthiness of The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. These changes may adversely affect the value of your notes, including the price you may receive for your notes in any market making transaction. To the extent that GS&Co. makes a market in the notes, the quoted price will reflect the estimated value determined by reference to GS&Co.'s pricing models at that time, plus or minus its then current bid and ask spread for similar sized trades of structured notes (and subject to the declining excess amount described above).

Furthermore, if you sell your notes, you will likely be charged a commission for secondary market transactions, or the price will likely reflect a dealer discount. This commission or discount will further reduce the proceeds you would receive for your notes in a secondary market sale.

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There is no assurance that GS&Co. or any other party will be willing to purchase your notes at any price and, in this regard, GS&Co. is not obligated to make a market in the notes. See **Additional Risk Factors Specific to the Underlier-Linked Notes – Your Notes May Not Have an Active Trading Market** on page S-31 of the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738.

### **The Notes Are Subject to the Credit Risk of the Issuer and the Guarantor**

Although the return on the notes will be based on the performance of the underlier, the payment of any amount due on the notes is subject to the credit risk of GS Finance Corp., as issuer of the notes, and the credit risk of The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. as guarantor of the notes. The notes are our unsecured obligations. Investors are dependent on our ability to pay all amounts due on the notes, and therefore investors are subject to our credit risk and to changes in the market's view of our creditworthiness. Similarly, investors are dependent on the ability of The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., as guarantor of the notes, to pay all amounts due on the notes, and therefore are also subject to its credit risk and to changes in the market's view of its creditworthiness. See **Description of the Notes We May Offer – Information About Our Medium-Term Notes, Series E Program – How the Notes Rank Against Other Debt** on page S-4 of the accompanying prospectus supplement and **Description of Debt Securities We May Offer – Guarantee by The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.** on page 42 of the accompanying prospectus.

### **The Amount Payable on Your Notes Is Not Linked to the Level of the Underlier at Any Time Other Than the Determination Date**

The final underlier level will be based on the closing level of the underlier on the determination date (subject to adjustment as described elsewhere in this pricing supplement). Therefore, if the closing level of the underlier dropped precipitously on the determination date, the cash settlement amount for your notes may be significantly less than it would have been had the cash settlement amount been linked to the closing level of the underlier prior to such drop in the level of the underlier. Although the actual level of the underlier on the stated maturity date or at other times during the life of your notes may be higher than the final underlier level, you will not benefit from the closing level of the underlier at any time other than on the determination date.

### **You May Lose a Substantial Portion of Your Investment in the Notes**

You can lose a substantial portion of your investment in the notes. The cash payment on your notes on the stated maturity date will be based on the performance of the MSCI EAFE Index as measured from the initial underlier level set on the trade date to the closing level on the determination date. If the final underlier level is *less than* the buffer level, you will have a loss for each \$1,000 of the face amount of your notes equal to the *product* of (i) the *sum* of the underlier return *plus* the buffer amount *times* (ii) \$1,000. Thus, you may lose a substantial portion of your investment in the notes, which would include any premium to face amount you paid when you purchased the notes.

Also, the market price of your notes prior to the stated maturity date may be significantly lower than the purchase price you pay for your notes. Consequently, if you sell your notes before the stated maturity date, you may receive far less than the amount of your investment in the notes.

### **Your Notes Do Not Bear Interest**

You will not receive any interest payments on your notes. As a result, even if the cash settlement amount payable for your notes on the stated maturity date exceeds the face amount of your notes, the overall return you earn on your notes may be less than you would have earned by investing in a non-indexed debt security of comparable maturity that bears interest at a prevailing market rate.

**You Have No Shareholder Rights or Rights to Receive Any Underlier Stock**

Investing in your notes will not make you a holder of any of the underlier stocks. Neither you nor any other holder or owner of your notes will have any rights with respect to the underlier stocks, including any voting rights, any right to receive dividends or other distributions, any rights to make a claim against the underlier stocks or any other rights of a holder of the underlier stocks. Your notes will be paid in cash and you will have no right to receive delivery of any underlier stocks.

**We May Sell an Additional Aggregate Face Amount of the Notes at a Different Issue Price**

At our sole option, we may decide to sell an additional aggregate face amount of the notes subsequent to the date of this pricing supplement. The issue price of the notes in the subsequent sale may differ substantially (higher or lower) from the original issue price you paid as provided on the cover of this pricing supplement.

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**If You Purchase Your Notes at a Premium to Face Amount, the Return on Your Investment Will Be Lower Than the Return on Notes Purchased at Face Amount and the Impact of Certain Key Terms of the Notes Will Be Negatively Affected**

The cash settlement amount will not be adjusted based on the issue price you pay for the notes. If you purchase notes at a price that differs from the face amount of the notes, then the return on your investment in such notes held to the stated maturity date will differ from, and may be substantially less than, the return on notes purchased at face amount. If you purchase your notes at a premium to face amount and hold them to the stated maturity date, the return on your investment in the notes will be lower than it would have been had you purchased the notes at face amount or a discount to face amount. In addition, the impact of the buffer level on the return on your investment will depend upon the price you pay for your notes relative to face amount. For example, if you purchase your notes at a premium to face amount, the buffer level, while still providing some protection for the return on the notes, will allow a greater percentage decrease in your investment in the notes than would have been the case for notes purchased at face amount or a discount to face amount.

**An Investment in the Offered Notes Is Subject to Risks Associated with Foreign Securities**

The value of your notes is linked to an underlier that is comprised of stocks from one or more foreign securities markets. Investments linked to the value of foreign equity securities involve particular risks. Any foreign securities market may be less liquid, more volatile and affected by global or domestic market developments in a different way than are the U.S. securities market or other foreign securities markets. Both government intervention in a foreign securities market, either directly or indirectly, and cross-shareholdings in foreign companies, may affect trading prices and volumes in that market. Also, there is generally less publicly available information about foreign companies than about those U.S. companies that are subject to the reporting requirements of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. Further, foreign companies are subject to accounting, auditing and financial reporting standards and requirements that differ from those applicable to U.S. reporting companies.

The prices of securities in a foreign country are subject to political, economic, financial and social factors that are unique to such foreign country's geographical region. These factors include: recent changes, or the possibility of future changes, in the applicable foreign government's economic and fiscal policies; the possible implementation of, or changes in, currency exchange laws or other laws or restrictions applicable to foreign companies or investments in foreign equity securities; fluctuations, or the possibility of fluctuations, in currency exchange rates; and the possibility of outbreaks of hostility, political instability, natural disaster or adverse public health developments. The United Kingdom has voted to leave the European Union (popularly known as "Brexit"). The effect of Brexit is uncertain, and Brexit has and may continue to contribute to volatility in the prices of securities of companies located in Europe and currency exchange rates, including the valuation of the euro and British pound in particular. Any one of these factors, or the combination of more than one of these factors, could negatively affect such foreign securities market and the price of securities therein. Further, geographical regions may react to global factors in different ways, which may cause the prices of securities in a foreign securities market to fluctuate in a way that differs from those of securities in the U.S. securities market or other foreign securities markets. Foreign economies may also differ from the U.S. economy in important respects, including growth of gross national product, rate of inflation, capital reinvestment, resources and self-sufficiency, which may have a positive or negative effect on foreign securities prices.

**Your Investment in the Notes Will Be Subject to Foreign Currency Exchange Rate Risk**

Because the underlier is a U.S. dollar denominated index whose underlying stock prices are converted by the underlier sponsor into U.S. dollars for purposes of calculating the value of the underlier, investors in the notes will be exposed to currency exchange rate risk with respect to each of the currencies represented in the underlier which are converted

in such manner. An investor's net exposure will depend on the extent to which the currencies represented in the underlier strengthen or weaken against the U.S. dollar and the relative weight of each relevant currency represented in the overall underlier. If, taking into account such weighting, the U.S. dollar strengthens against the component currencies, the value of the underlier may be adversely affected and the amount payable at maturity of the notes may be reduced.

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**Regulators Are Investigating Potential Manipulation of Published Currency Exchange Rates**

It has been reported that the U.K. Financial Conduct Authority and regulators from other countries are in the process of investigating the potential manipulation of published currency exchange rates. If such manipulation has occurred or is continuing, certain published exchange rates may have been, or may be in the future, artificially lower (or higher) than they would otherwise have been. Any such manipulation could have an adverse impact on any payments on, and the value of, your notes and the trading market for your notes. In addition, we cannot predict whether any changes or reforms affecting the determination or publication of exchange rates or the supervision of currency trading will be implemented in connection with these investigations. Any such changes or reforms could also adversely impact your notes.

**Your Notes May Be Subject to an Adverse Change in Tax Treatment in the Future**

The tax consequences of an investment in your notes are uncertain, both as to the timing and character of any inclusion in income in respect of your notes.

The Internal Revenue Service announced on December 7, 2007 that it is considering issuing guidance regarding the proper U.S. federal income tax treatment of an instrument such as your notes, and any such guidance could adversely affect the tax treatment and the value of your notes. Among other things, the Internal Revenue Service may decide to require the holders to accrue ordinary income on a current basis and recognize ordinary income on payment at maturity, and could subject non-U.S. investors to withholding tax. Furthermore, in 2007, legislation was introduced in Congress that, if enacted, would have required holders that acquired instruments such as your notes after the bill was enacted to accrue interest income over the term of such instruments even though there will be no interest payments over the term of such instruments. It is not possible to predict whether a similar or identical bill will be enacted in the future, or whether any such bill would affect the tax treatment of your notes. We describe these developments in more detail under *Supplemental Discussion of Federal Income Tax Consequences* on page S-41 of the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738. You should consult your tax advisor about this matter. Except to the extent otherwise provided by law, GS Finance Corp. intends to continue treating the notes for U.S. federal income tax purposes in accordance with the treatment described under *Supplemental Discussion of Federal Income Tax Consequences* on page S-41 of the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738 unless and until such time as Congress, the Treasury Department or the Internal Revenue Service determine that some other treatment is more appropriate.

**United States Alien Holders Should Consider the Withholding Tax Implications of Owning the Notes**

The Treasury Department has issued regulations under which amounts paid or deemed paid on certain financial instruments ( 871(m) financial instruments ) that are treated as attributable to U.S.-source dividends could be treated, in whole or in part depending on the circumstances, as a dividend equivalent payment that is subject to tax at a rate of 30% (or a lower rate under an applicable treaty), which in the case of any amounts a United States alien holder receives upon the sale, exchange or maturity of the notes, could be collected via withholding. If these regulations were to apply to the notes, we may be required to withhold such taxes if any U.S.-source dividends are paid on the stocks included in the underlier during the term of the notes. We could also require a United States alien holder to make certifications (e.g., an applicable Internal Revenue Service Form W-8) prior to the maturity of the notes in order to avoid or minimize withholding obligations, and we could withhold accordingly (subject to the United States alien holder's potential right to claim a refund from the Internal Revenue Service) if such certifications were not received or were not satisfactory. If withholding was required, we would not be required to pay any additional amounts with respect to amounts so withheld. These regulations generally will apply to 871(m) financial instruments (or a combination of financial instruments treated as having been entered into in connection with each other) issued (or significantly modified and treated as retired and reissued) on or after January 1, 2021, but will also apply to certain

871(m) financial instruments (or a combination of financial instruments treated as having been entered into in connection with each other) that have a delta (as defined in the applicable Treasury regulations) of one and are issued (or significantly modified and treated as retired and reissued) on or after January 1, 2017. In addition, these regulations will not apply to financial instruments that reference a qualified index (as defined in the regulations). We have determined that, as of the issue date of your notes, your notes will not be subject to withholding under these rules. In certain limited circumstances, however, you should be aware that it is possible for United States alien holders to be liable for tax under these rules with respect to a combination of transactions treated as having been entered into in connection with each other even when no withholding is required. You should consult your tax advisor concerning these regulations, subsequent official guidance and regarding any other possible alternative characterizations of your notes for U.S. federal income tax purposes.

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**Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) Withholding May Apply to Payments on Your Notes,  
Including as a Result of the Failure of the Bank or Broker Through Which You Hold the Notes to Provide  
Information to Tax Authorities**

Please see the discussion under **United States Taxation** **Taxation of Debt Securities** **Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) Withholding** in the accompanying prospectus for a description of the applicability of FATCA to payments made on your notes.

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**Table of Contents****THE UNDERLIER**

The MSCI EAFE Index (the underlier) is a stock index calculated, published and disseminated daily by MSCI Inc., which we refer to as MSCI, through numerous data vendors, on the MSCI website and in real time on Bloomberg Financial Markets and Reuters Limited.

## MSCI EAFE Index

## Index Stock Weighting by Country

as of September 26, 2018

| <b><u>Country:</u></b> | <b><u>Percentage (%)</u>*</b> |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Australia              | 6.69%                         |
| Austria                | 0.24%                         |
| Belgium                | 1.03%                         |
| Denmark                | 1.68%                         |
| Finland                | 1.05%                         |
| France                 | 11.25%                        |
| Germany                | 9.50%                         |
| Hong Kong              | 3.49%                         |
| Ireland                | 0.52%                         |
| Israel                 | 0.55%                         |
| Italy                  | 2.39%                         |
| Japan                  | 24.41%                        |
| Netherlands            | 3.35%                         |
| New Zealand            | 0.21%                         |
| Norway                 | 0.78%                         |
| Portugal               | 0.16%                         |
| Singapore              | 1.25%                         |
| Spain                  | 3.00%                         |
| Sweden                 | 2.72%                         |
| Switzerland            | 8.22%                         |
| United Kingdom         | 17.49%                        |

\*Information provided by MSCI. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

## MSCI EAFE Index

## Index Stock Weighting by Sector

as of September 26, 2018

| <b><u>Sector**</u></b> | <b><u>Percentage (%)</u>*</b> |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Consumer Discretionary | 12.11%                        |

Consumer Staples

11.09%