

GOLDMAN SACHS GROUP INC

Form 424B2

September 21, 2018

[Table of Contents](#)

Filed Pursuant to Rule 424(b)(2)

Registration Statement No. 333-219206

Subject to Completion. Dated September 21, 2018.

GS Finance Corp.

\$

Buffered iShares® MSCI Emerging Markets ETF-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 2, 2023) is based on the performance of the iShares® MSCI Emerging Markets ETF (ETF) as measured from the trade date (expected to be September 27, 2018) to and including the determination date (expected to be September 27, 2023).

The return on your notes is linked to the performance of the ETF, and not to that of the MSCI Emerging Markets Index (index) on which the ETF is based. The ETF follows a strategy of representative sampling , which means the ETF's holdings are not the same as those of the index. The performance of the ETF may significantly diverge from that of the index.

If the final ETF level on the determination date is greater than the initial ETF level (set on the trade date), the return on your notes will be positive and will equal the ETF return, subject to the maximum settlement amount of \$2,150 for each \$1,000 face amount of your notes.

If the final ETF level declines by up to 25% from the initial ETF level, you will receive the face amount of your notes. If the final ETF level declines by more than 25% from the initial ETF level, the return on your notes will be negative and will equal the ETF return *plus* 25%. **You could lose a significant portion of the face amount of your notes.** To determine your payment at maturity, we will calculate the ETF return, which is the percentage increase or decrease in the final ETF level from the initial ETF level. At maturity, for each \$1,000 face amount of your notes, you will receive an amount in cash equal to:

- if the ETF return is *positive* (the final ETF level is *greater than* the initial ETF level), the *sum* of (i) \$1,000 *plus* (ii) the *product* of (a) \$1,000 *times* (b) the ETF return, subject to the maximum settlement amount;
- if the ETF return is *zero* or *negative* but *not below* -25% (the final ETF level is *equal to* the initial ETF level or is *less than* the initial ETF level, but not by more than 25%), \$1,000; or
- if the ETF return is *negative* and is *below* -25% (the final ETF level is *less than* the initial ETF level by more than 25%), the *sum* of (i) \$1,000 *plus* (ii) the *product* of (a) the *sum* of the ETF return *plus* 25% *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-11.

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 \$920 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 2, 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-21.

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.

Table of Contents

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 \$920 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.

Table of Contents

Buffered iShares® MSCI Emerging Markets ETF- Linked Notes due

INVESTMENT THESIS

You should be willing to forgo:

- gains greater than a maximum settlement amount of 215% of the face amount in exchange for a buffer against loss of principal in the event of a decline of up to 25% in the final underlier level relative to the initial underlier level.
- interest payments and risk losing a substantial portion of your investment for the potential to earn any positive underlier return up to a maximum settlement amount of 215% of the face amount.

Your maximum return on your notes will not be greater than 115%, and you could lose a substantial portion of your investment if the underlier return is less than -25%.

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* the underlier return, subject to a maximum settlement amount of 215%;
- if the final underlier level is equal to or less than 100% of the initial underlier level but greater than or equal to 75% of the initial underlier level, 100%; or

- if the final underlier level is less than 75% of the initial underlier level, 100% *minus* 1% for every 1% that the final underlier level has declined below 75% of the initial underlier level

If the final underlier level declines by more than 25% 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

Issuer:	GS Finance Corp.
Guarantor:	The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.
Underlier:	iShares® MSCI Emerging Markets ETF (current Bloomberg symbol: EEM UP Equity)
Face Amount:	\$ in the aggregate; each note will have a face amount equal to \$1,000
Trade Date:	Expected to be September 27, 2018
Settlement Date:	Expected to be October 2, 2018
Determination Date:	Expected to be September 27, 2023
Stated Maturity Date:	Expected to be October 2, 2023
Initial Underlier Level:	To be determined on the trade date
Final Underlier Level:	The closing level of the underlier on the determination date
Underlier Return:	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
Upside Participation Rate:	100%
Buffer Level:	75% of the initial underlier level (equal to an underlier return of -25%)
Buffer Amount:	25%
Buffer Rate:	100%
Maximum Settlement Amount:	\$2,150
Cap Level:	215% of the initial underlier level
CUSIP/ISIN:	40055QZW5 / US40055QZW58

PS-3

Table of Contents

HYPOTHETICAL PAYMENT AT MATURITY

	Hypothetical Final Underlier Level (as Percentage of Initial Underlier Level)	Hypothetical Cash Settlement Amount (as Percentage of Face Amount)
	240.000%	215.000%
	215.000%	215.000%
	186.000%	186.000%
	157.000%	157.000%
	128.000%	128.000%
	100.000%	100.000%
	93.000%	100.000%
	87.000%	100.000%
	81.000%	100.000%
	75.000%	100.000%
	50.000%	75.000%
	25.000%	50.000%
	0.000%	25.000%

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.

Table of Contents

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 Buffered iShares® MSCI Emerging Markets ETF-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: 40055QZW5/ US40055QZW58

Company (Issuer): GS Finance Corp.

Guarantor: The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.

Underlier: the iShares® MSCI Emerging Markets ETF (current Bloomberg symbol: EEM UP Equity), or any successor underlier, as it may be modified, replaced or adjusted from time to time as provided herein

Underlying index: the MSCI Emerging Markets Index, as published by MSCI, Inc. (MSCI)

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* or *equal to* the cap level, the maximum settlement amount;
- if the final underlier level is *greater than* the initial underlier level but *less than* the cap 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

Cap level: 215% of the initial underlier level

Maximum settlement amount: \$2,150

Upside participation rate: 100%

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: 75% of the initial underlier level

Buffer rate: 100%

Buffer amount: 25%

Trade date: expected to be September 27, 2018

Original issue date (set on the trade date): expected to be October 2, 2018

PS-5

Table of Contents

Determination date (set on the trade date): expected to be September 27, 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.

Stated maturity date (set on the trade date): expected to be October 2, 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 sale price or last reported sale price, regular way, for the underlier, on a per-share or other unit basis:

- on the principal national securities exchange on which that underlier is listed for trading on that day, or
- if the underlier is not listed on any national securities exchange on that day, on any other U.S. national market system that is the primary market for the trading of that underlier. If the underlier is not listed or traded as described above, then the closing level for the underlier on any day will be the average, as determined by the calculation agent, of the bid prices for the underlier obtained from as many dealers in the underlier selected by the calculation agent as will make those bid prices available to the calculation agent. The number of dealers need not exceed three and may include the calculation agent or any of its or the company's affiliates.

The closing level is subject to adjustment as described under Anti-dilution adjustments below.

Trading day: a day on which (i) the exchange on which the underlier has its primary listing is open for trading and (ii) the price of one share of the underlier is quoted by the exchange on which such underlier has its primary listing

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 investment advisor: at any time, the person or entity, including any successor investment advisor, that serves as an investment advisor to the underlier as then in effect

Underlier stocks: at any time, the stocks that comprise the underlier 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 the underlier on its primary market 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 in the primary market for those contracts 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
- the underlier does not trade on what was the primary market for the underlier, 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 the 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.

For this purpose, an absence of trading in the primary securities market on which shares of the underlier are traded, or on which option or futures contracts, if available, relating to the underlier are traded, will not include any time when that

PS-6

Table of Contents

market is itself closed for trading under ordinary circumstances. In contrast, a suspension or limitation of trading in shares of the underlier or in option or futures contracts, if available, relating to the underlier in the primary market for the underlier or those contracts, by reason of:

- a price change exceeding limits set by that market,
- an imbalance of orders relating to the shares of the underlier or those contracts, or
- a disparity in bid and ask quotes relating to the shares of the underlier or those contracts,

will constitute a suspension or material limitation of trading in shares of the underlier 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 is delisted from the exchange on which the underlier has its primary listing and the underlier investment advisor or anyone else 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 underlier is delisted or withdrawn from the exchange on which the underlier has its primary listing 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.

Edgar Filing: GOLDMAN SACHS GROUP INC - Form 424B2

If the calculation agent determines that the underlier, the underlier stocks or the method of calculating the underlier is changed at any time in any respect including any split or reverse split of the underlier, a material change in the investment objective of the underlier and any addition, deletion or substitution and any reweighting or rebalancing of the underlier and whether the change is made by the underlier investment advisor 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 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.

Anti-dilution adjustments: The calculation agent will have discretion to adjust the closing level of the underlier if certain events occur (including those described above under Discontinuance or modification of the underlier). In the event that any event other than a delisting or withdrawal from the relevant exchange occurs, the calculation agent shall determine whether and to what extent an adjustment should be made to the level of the underlier or any other term. The calculation agent shall have no obligation to make an adjustment for any such event.

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

PS-7

Table of Contents**HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLES**

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-11 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	100%
Cap level	215% of the initial underlier level
Maximum settlement amount	\$2,150
Buffer level	75% of the initial underlier level
Buffer rate	100%
Buffer amount	25%
Neither a market disruption event nor a non-trading day occurs on the originally scheduled determination date	
No change in or affecting the underlier, any of the underlier stocks or the policies of underlier's investment advisor or the method by which the underlying index sponsor calculates the underlying index	
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.

PS-8

Table of Contents

Hypothetical Final Underlier Level	Hypothetical Cash Settlement Amount
(as Percentage of Initial Underlier Level)	(as Percentage of Face Amount)
240.000%	215.000%
215.000%	215.000%
186.000%	186.000%
157.000%	157.000%
128.000%	128.000%
100.000%	100.000%
93.000%	100.000%
87.000%	100.000%
81.000%	100.000%
75.000%	100.000%
50.000%	75.000%
25.000%	50.000%
0.000%	25.000%

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 50.000% 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 50.000% 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 75.000% of your investment in the notes. In addition, if the final underlier level were determined to be 240.000% of the initial underlier level, the cash settlement amount that we would deliver on your notes at maturity would be capped at the maximum settlement amount, or 215.000% of each \$1,000 face amount of your notes, as shown in the table above. As a result, if you held your notes to the stated maturity date, you would not benefit from any increase in the final underlier level over 215.000% of the initial underlier level.

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 75.000% (the section left of the 75.000% 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. The chart also shows that any hypothetical final underlier level of greater than or equal to 215.000% (the section right of the 215.000% marker on the horizontal axis) would result in a capped return on your investment.

Table of Contents

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.

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, 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.

PS-10

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.

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.

PS-11

Table of Contents

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 iShares® MSCI Emerging Markets ETF 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.

The Potential for the Value of Your Notes to Increase Will Be Limited

Your ability to participate in any change in the value of the underlier over the life of your notes will be limited because of the cap level. The maximum settlement amount will limit the cash settlement amount you may receive for each of your notes at maturity, no matter how much the level of the underlier may rise beyond the cap level over the life of your notes. Accordingly, the amount payable for each of your notes may be significantly less than it would have been had you invested directly in the underlier.

The Policies of the Underlier's Investment Advisor, BlackRock Fund Advisors, and MSCI, the Sponsor of The Underlying Index, Could Affect the Amount Payable on Your Notes and Their Market Value

The underlier's investment advisor, BlackRock Fund Advisors (BFA, or the underlier investment advisor) may from time to time be called upon to make certain policy decisions or judgments with respect to the implementation of policies of the investment advisor concerning the calculation of the net asset value of the underlier, additions, deletions or substitutions of securities in the underlier and the manner in which changes affecting the underlying index are reflected in the underlier that could affect the market price of the shares of the underlier, and therefore, the amount payable on your notes on the maturity date. The amount payable on your notes and their market value could also be affected if the investment advisor changes these policies, for example, by changing the manner in which it calculates the net asset value of the underlier, or if the investment advisor discontinues or suspends calculation or publication of the net asset value of the underlier, in which case it may become difficult or inappropriate to determine the market value of your notes.

If events such as these occur, the calculation agent which initially will be GS&Co. may determine the closing price of the underlier on the determination date and thus the amount payable on the maturity date, if any in a manner, in its

Table of Contents

sole discretion, it considers appropriate. We describe the discretion that the calculation agent will have in determining the closing underlier price on the determination date and the amount payable on your notes more fully under Supplemental Terms of the Notes Discontinuance or Modification of an Underlier on page S-23 of the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734.

In addition, MSCI (the underlying index sponsor) owns the underlying index and is responsible for the design and maintenance of the underlying index. The policies of the underlying index sponsor concerning the calculation of the underlying index, including decisions regarding the addition, deletion or substitution of the equity securities included in the underlying index, could affect the level of the underlying index and, consequently, could affect the market prices of shares of the underlier and, therefore, the amount payable on your notes and their market value.

There Are Risks Associated with The Underlier

Although the underlier's shares are listed for trading on NYSE Arca, Inc. (the NYSE Arca) and a number of similar products have been traded on the NYSE Arca or other securities exchanges for varying periods of time, there is no assurance that an active trading market will continue for the shares of the underlier or that there will be liquidity in the trading market.

In addition, the underlier is subject to management risk, which is the risk that the underlier investment advisor's investment strategy, the implementation of which is subject to a number of constraints, may not produce the intended results. For example, the underlier investment advisor may select up to 10% of the underlier's assets to be invested in shares of equity securities that are not included in the underlying index. The underlier is also not actively managed and may be affected by a general decline in market segments relating to the underlying index. The underlier investment advisor invests in securities included in, or representative of, the underlying index regardless of their investment merits. The underlier investment advisor does not attempt to take defensive positions in declining markets.

In addition, the underlier is subject to custody risk, which refers to the risks in the process of clearing and settling trades and to the holding of securities by local banks, agent and depositories. Low trading volumes and volatile prices in less developed markets make trades harder to complete and settle, and governments or trade groups may compel local agents to hold securities in designated depositories that are not subject to independent evaluation. The less developed a country's securities market is, the greater the likelihood of custody problems.

Further, under continuous listing standards adopted by the NYSE Arca, the underlier will be required to confirm on an ongoing basis that the components of the underlying index satisfy the applicable listing requirements. In the event that its underlying index does not comply with the applicable listing requirements, the underlier would be required to rectify such non-compliance by requesting that the underlying index sponsor modify such underlying index, adopting a new underlying index or obtaining relief from the Securities and Exchange Commission. There can be no assurance that the underlying index sponsor would so modify the underlying index or that relief would be obtained from the Securities and Exchange Commission and, therefore, non-compliance with the continuous listing standards may result in the underlier being delisted by the NYSE Arca.

The Underlier and the Underlying Index are Different and the Performance of the Underlier May Not Correlate with the Performance of the Underlying Index

The underlier uses a representative sampling strategy (more fully described under "The Underlier") to attempt to track the performance of the underlying index. The underlier may not hold all or substantially all of the equity securities included in the underlying index and may hold securities or assets not included in the underlying index. Therefore, while the performance of the underlier is generally linked to the performance of the underlying index, the performance of the underlier is also linked in part to shares of equity securities not included in the underlying index and to the performance of other assets, such as futures contracts, options and swaps, as well as cash and cash equivalents, including shares of money market funds affiliated with the underlier investment advisor.

Imperfect correlation between the underlier's portfolio securities and those in the underlying index, rounding of prices, changes to the underlying index and regulatory requirements may cause tracking error, the divergence of the underlier's performance from that of the underlying index.

In addition, the performance of the underlier will reflect additional transaction costs and fees that are not included in the calculation of the underlying index and this may increase the tracking error of the underlier. Also, corporate actions with respect to the sample of equity securities (such as mergers and spin-offs) may impact the performance differential between the underlier and the underlying index. Finally, because the shares of the underlier are traded on the NYSE Arca and are subject to market supply and investor demand, the market value of one share of the underlier may differ from the net asset value per share of the underlier.

For all of the foregoing reasons, the performance of the underlier may not correlate with the performance of the underlying index. Consequently, the return on the notes will not be the same as investing directly in the underlier or in the underlying

PS-13

Table of Contents

index or in the underlier stocks or in the underlying index stocks, and will not be the same as investing in a debt security with a payment at maturity linked to the performance of the underlying index.

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

The value of your notes is linked to an underlier that holds stocks traded in the equity markets of emerging market countries. 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.

Because foreign exchanges may be open on days when the underlier is not traded, the value of the securities underlying the underlier may change on days when shareholders will not be able to purchase or sell shares of the underlier.

The countries whose markets are represented by the underlier include Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Egypt, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey and United Arab Emirates.

Countries with emerging markets may have relatively unstable governments, may present the risks of nationalization of businesses, restrictions on foreign ownership and prohibitions on the repatriation of assets, and may have less protection of property rights than more developed countries. The economies of countries with emerging markets may be based on only a few industries, may be highly vulnerable to changes in local or global trade conditions, and may suffer from extreme and volatile debt burdens or inflation rates. Local securities markets may trade a small number of securities and may be unable to respond effectively to increases in trading volume, potentially making prompt liquidation of holdings difficult or impossible at times. It will also likely be more costly and difficult for the underlier investment advisor to enforce the laws or regulations of a foreign country or trading facility, and it is

possible that the foreign country or trading facility may not have laws or regulations which adequately protect the rights and interests of investors in the stocks included in the underlier.

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

The underlier holds assets that are denominated in non-U.S. dollar currencies. The value of the assets held by the underlier that are denominated in non-U.S. dollar currencies will be adjusted to reflect their U.S. dollar value by converting the price of such assets from the non-U.S. dollar currency to U.S. dollars. Consequently, if the value of the U.S. dollar strengthens against the non-U.S. dollar currency in which an asset is denominated, the price of the underlier may not increase even if the non-dollar value of the asset held by the underlier increases.

Foreign currency exchange rates vary over time, and may vary considerably during the term of your notes. Changes in a particular exchange rate result from the interaction of many factors directly or indirectly affecting economic and political conditions. Of particular importance are:

- existing and expected rates of inflation;
- existing and expected interest rate levels;
- the balance of payments among countries;
- the extent of government surpluses or deficits in the relevant foreign country and the United States; and

Table of Contents

- other financial, economic, military and political factors.

All of these factors are, in turn, sensitive to the monetary, fiscal and trade policies pursued by the governments of the relevant foreign countries and the United States and other countries important to international trade and finance.

The market price of the notes and price of the underlier could also be adversely affected by delays in, or refusals to grant, any required governmental approval for conversions of a local currency and remittances abroad or other de facto restrictions on the repatriation of U.S. dollars.

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.

The Return on Your Notes Will Not Reflect Any Dividends Paid on the Underlier or the Underlier Stocks

The return on your notes will not reflect the return you would realize if you actually owned the ETF and received the distributions paid on the shares of the ETF. You will not receive any dividends that may be paid on any of the ETF stocks by the ETF stock issuers. See **You Have No Shareholder Rights or Rights to Receive Any Shares of the ETF or Any ETF Stock** below for additional information.

You Have No Shareholder Rights or Rights to Receive Any Shares of the Underlier or Any Underlier Stock

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

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 and the cap 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 cap level will only permit a lower positive return in your investment in the notes than would have been the case for notes purchased at face amount or a discount to face amount. Similarly, 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.

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

Table of Contents

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 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, 2019, 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.

Your Notes May Be Subject to the Constructive Ownership Rules

There exists a risk that the constructive ownership rules of Section 1260 of the Internal Revenue Code could apply to your notes. If your notes were subject to the constructive ownership rules, then any long-term capital gain that you realize upon the sale, exchange, redemption or maturity of your notes would be re-characterized as ordinary income (and you would be subject to an interest charge on deferred tax liability with respect to such re-characterized capital gain) to the extent that such capital gain exceeds the amount of net underlying long-term capital gain (as defined in Section 1260 of the Internal Revenue Code). Because the application of the constructive ownership rules is unclear you are strongly urged to consult your tax advisor with respect to the possible application of the constructive ownership rules to your investment in the notes.

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

Edgar Filing: GOLDMAN SACHS GROUP INC - Form 424B2

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.

PS-16

Table of Contents**THE UNDERLIER**

The shares of the iShares® MSCI Emerging Markets ETF are issued by iShares, Inc., a registered investment company. The iShares® MSCI Emerging Markets ETF seeks investment results that correspond generally to the price and yield performance, before fees and expenses, of the MSCI Emerging Markets Index. The iShares® MSCI Emerging Markets ETF trades on the NYSE Arca under the ticker symbol EEM . BlackRock Fund Advisors (BFA) serves as the investment advisor to the iShares® MSCI Emerging Markets ETF.

The following tables display the top holdings and weighting by sector and country of the iShares® MSCI Emerging Markets ETF. A list of constituent stocks can be found at us.ishares.com/product_info/fund/overview/EEM.htm. We are not incorporating by reference the website or any material it includes in this pricing supplement. This information has been obtained from the iShares® website without independent verification.

iShares® MSCI Emerging Markets ETF Top Ten Holdings as of September 19, 2018

<u>ETF Stock Issuer</u>	<u>Percentage (%)</u>
TENCENT HOLDINGS LTD	4.57%
TAIWAN SEMICONDUCTOR MANUFACTURING	4.03%
SAMSUNG ELECTRONICS LTD	3.87%
ALIBABA GOUH HOLDING ADR REPRESENTEN	3.68%
NASPERS LIMITED N LTD	1.85%
CHINA CONSTRUCTION BANK CORP H	1.59%
BAIDU ADR REPTG INC CLASS A	1.23%
CHINA MOBILE LTD	1.16%
PING AN INSURANCE (GROUP) CO OF CH	0.99%
INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL BANK OF	0.95%
Total	23.92%

iShares® MSCI Emerging Markets ETF Weighting by Country as of September 19, 2018*

<u>Country</u>	<u>Percentage (%)</u>
China	30.93%
Korea (South)	14.72%
Taiwan	12.12%
India	8.94%
South Africa	6.03%
Brazil	5.97%
Russian Federation	3.55%
Mexico	3.21%
Thailand	2.50%
Malaysia	2.46%
Indonesia	1.93%

Edgar Filing: GOLDMAN SACHS GROUP INC - Form 424B2

Poland	1.22%
Chile	1.09%
Cash and/or Derivatives	0.33%
Other	5.00%
Total	100.00%

* Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

It has been announced that the Global Industry Classification Structure, which MSCI utilizes to classify the constituents of the MSCI Emerging Markets Index, is expected to be updated in September 2018. Please see below for additional information about these updates.

iShares® MSCI Emerging Markets ETF Weighting by Sector as of September 19, 2018*

<u>Sector</u>	<u>Percentage (%)</u>
Information Technology	26.92%
Financials	22.91%
Consumer Discretionary	9.14%

PS-17

Table of Contents

Energy	7.93%
Materials	7.85%
Consumer Staples	6.60%
Industrials	5.39%
Telecommunications	4.47%
Health Care	3.09%
Real Estate	2.90%
Utilities	2.46%
Cash and/or Derivatives	0.33%
Total	99.99%

* Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

As of August 31, 2018, iShares® reported the following average annual returns on the market price of the ETF's shares and the MSCI Emerging Markets Index. The market price of the ETF's shares takes into account distributions on the shares and the returns shown account for changes in the mid-point of the bid and ask prices at 4:00 p.m., Eastern time on the relevant date. ETF shares: 1 year, -1.5%; 3 years, 10.73%; 5 years, 4.63%; 10 years, 2.75%; since inception, 10.99%; MSCI Emerging Markets Index: 1 year, -0.68%; 3 years, 11.42%; 5 years, 5.04%; 10 years, 3.45%; since ETF inception, 11.48%.

Notwithstanding the iShares® MSCI Emerging Markets ETF's investment objective, the return on your notes will not reflect any dividends paid on the shares of the iShares® MSCI Emerging Markets ETF, on the securities purchased by the iShares® MSCI Emerging Markets ETF or on the securities that comprise the MSCI Emerging Markets Index.

As of the close on May 31, 2018, MSCI began a multi-step process to include, in the MSCI Emerging Markets Index, large cap China A shares that are not in trading suspension. As part of the first step of the inclusion process, which resulted from the May 2018 quarterly index review, MSCI added such large cap China A shares to the MSCI Emerging Markets Index at 2.5% of their foreign inclusion factor-adjusted market capitalization. In connection with the August 2018 quarterly index review, MSCI implemented the second step of the inclusion process by increasing the foreign inclusion factor-adjusted market capitalization of those existing China A share constituents from 2.5% to 5%. With the implementation of this second step, and the inclusion of additional China A shares in connection with the August 2018 quarterly index review, China A shares were initially expected to represent approximately 0.75% of the MSCI Emerging Markets Index.

MSCI has announced that, beginning in June 2019, it expects to include the MSCI Saudi Arabia Index in the MSCI Emerging Markets Index, representing on a pro forma basis a weight of approximately 2.6% of the MSCI Emerging Markets Index with 32 securities, following a two-step inclusion process. The first inclusion step is expected to coincide with the May 2019 semi-annual review and the second inclusion step is expected to take place as part of the August 2019 quarterly index review. In addition, MSCI has announced the reclassification of the MSCI Argentina Index from a frontier market to an emerging market, and the MSCI Argentina Index is expected to be included in the MSCI Emerging Markets Index coinciding with the May 2019 semi-annual index review. MSCI expects to continue to restrict the inclusion in the MSCI Argentina Index to only foreign listings of Argentinian companies, such as American depositary receipts.

MSCI and S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC have announced that the Global Industry Classification Sector structure is expected to be updated after the close of business on September 28, 2018. Among other things, the update is expected to broaden the current Telecommunications Services sector and rename it the Communication Services sector. The renamed sector is expected to include the existing Telecommunication Services Industry group, as well as the Media Industry group, which is expected to move from the Consumer Discretionary sector and be renamed the Media & Entertainment Industry group. The Media & Entertainment Industry group is expected to contain three industries: Media, Entertainment and Interactive Media & Services. The Media industry is expected to continue to consist of the Advertising, Broadcasting, Cable & Satellite and Publishing sub-industries. The Entertainment industry is expected to contain the Movies & Entertainment sub-industry (which is expected to include online entertainment streaming companies in addition to companies currently classified in such industry) and the Interactive Home Entertainment sub-industry (which is expected to include companies from the current Home Entertainment Software sub-industry in the Information Technology sector, as well as producers of mobile gaming applications). The Interactive Media & Services industry and sub-industry is expected to include companies engaged in content and information creation or distribution through proprietary platforms, where revenues are derived primarily through pay-per-click advertisements, and will include search engines, social media and networking platforms, online classifieds and online review companies.

The above information supplements the description of the underlier found in the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734. This information was derived from information prepared by the investment advisor, however, the percentages we have listed above are approximate and may not match the information available on the investment advisor's website due to subsequent corporate actions or other activity relating to a particular

PS-18

Table of Contents

stock. For more details about the underlier, the investment advisor and license agreement between the investment advisor and the issuer, see The Underliers The iShares® MSCI Emerging Markets ETF on page S-90 of the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734.

iShares® is a registered trademark of BlackRock Institutional Trust Company, N.A. (BITC). The securities are not sponsored, endorsed, sold, or promoted by BITC. BITC makes no representations or warranties to the owners of the securities or any member of the public regarding the advisability of investing in the securities. BITC has no obligation or liability in connection with the operation, marketing, trading or sale of the securities.

The MSCI Indexes are the exclusive property of MSCI Inc. (MSCI). The securities referred to herein are not sponsored, endorsed, or promoted by MSCI, and MSCI bears no liability with respect to any such securities.

PS-19

Table of Contents

Historical Closing Levels of the Underlier

The closing level of the underlier has fluctuated in the past and may, in the future, experience significant fluctuations. Any historical upward or downward trend in the closing level of the underlier during the period shown below is not an indication that the underlier is more or less likely to increase or decrease at any time during the life of your notes.

You should not take the historical levels of the underlier as an indication of the future performance of the underlier. We cannot give you any assurance that the future performance of the underlier or the underlier stocks will result in your receiving an amount greater than the outstanding face amount of your notes on the stated maturity date.

Neither we nor any of our affiliates make any representation to you as to the performance of the underlier. 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. The actual performance of the underlier over the life of the offered notes, as well as the cash settlement amount, may bear little relation to the historical closing levels shown below.

The graph below shows the daily historical closing levels of the underlier from September 19, 2008 through September 19, 2018. We obtained the closing levels in the graph below from Bloomberg Financial Services, without independent verification.

Historical Performance of the iShares® MSCI Emerging Markets ETF

PS-20

Table of Contents

SUPPLEMENTAL DISCUSSION OF U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSEQUENCES

You will be obligated pursuant to the terms of the notes in the absence of a change in law, an administrative determination or a judicial ruling to the contrary to characterize each note for all tax purposes as a pre-paid derivative contract in respect of the underlier, as described under Supplemental Discussion of Federal Income Tax Consequences on page S-41 of the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738. Pursuant to this approach, it is the opinion of Sidley Austin LLP that upon the sale, exchange or maturity of your notes, it would be reasonable for you to recognize capital gain or loss equal to the difference, if any, between the amount of cash you receive at such time and your tax basis in your notes. Pursuant to Treasury regulations, Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) withholding (as described in United States Taxation Taxation of Debt Securities Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) Withholding in the accompanying prospectus) will generally apply to obligations that are issued on or after July 1, 2014; therefore, the notes will generally be subject to FATCA withholding. However, according to published guidance, the withholding tax described above will not apply to payments of gross proceeds from the sale, exchange or other disposition of the notes made before January 1, 2019.

SUPPLEMENTAL PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION; CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

See Supplemental Plan of Distribution on page S-49 of the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738 and Plan of Distribution Conflicts of Interest on page 94 of the accompanying prospectus. GS Finance Corp. estimates that its share of the total offering expenses, excluding underwriting discounts and commissions, will be approximately \$.

GS Finance Corp. expects to agree to sell to Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC (GS&Co.), and GS&Co. expects to agree to purchase from GS Finance Corp., the aggregate face amount of the offered notes specified on the front cover of this pricing supplement. GS&Co. proposes initially to offer the notes to the public at the original issue prices set forth on the cover page of this pricing supplement, and to certain securities dealers at such prices less a concession not in excess of % of the face amount. The original issue price for notes purchased by certain retirement accounts and certain fee-based advisory accounts will be % of the face amount of the notes, which will reduce the underwriting discount specified on the cover of this pricing supplement with respect to such notes to %. GS&Co. is an affiliate of GS Finance Corp. and The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. and, as such, will have a conflict of interest in this offering of notes within the meaning of Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc. (FINRA) Rule 5121. Consequently, this offering of notes will be conducted in compliance with the provisions of FINRA Rule 5121. GS&Co. will not be permitted to sell notes in this offering to an account over which it exercises discretionary authority without the prior specific written approval of the account holder.

We expect to deliver the notes against payment therefor in New York, New York on October 2, 2018. Under Rule 15c6-1 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, trades in the secondary market generally are required to settle in two business days, unless the parties to any such trade expressly agree otherwise. Accordingly, purchasers who wish to trade notes on any date prior to two business days before delivery will be required to specify alternative settlement arrangements to prevent a failed settlement.

We have been advised by GS&Co. that it intends to make a market in the notes. However, neither GS&Co. nor any of our other affiliates that makes a market is obligated to do so and any of them may stop doing so at any time without notice. No assurance can be given as to the liquidity or trading market for the notes.

The notes will not be listed on any securities exchange or interdealer quotation system.

PS-21

Table of Contents

We have not authorized anyone to provide any information or to make any representations other than those contained or incorporated by reference in this pricing supplement, the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738, the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734, the accompanying prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus. We take no responsibility for, and can provide no assurance as to the reliability of, any other information that others may give you. This pricing supplement, the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738, the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734, the accompanying prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus is an offer to sell only the notes offered hereby, but only under circumstances and in jurisdictions where it is lawful to do so. The information contained in this pricing supplement, the accompanying product supplement no. 1,738, the accompanying general terms supplement no. 1,734, the accompanying prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus is current only as of the respective dates of such documents.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pricing Supplement		<u>Page</u>
<u>Terms and Conditions</u>		PS-5
<u>Hypothetical Examples</u>		PS-8
<u>Additional Risk Factors Specific to Your Notes</u>		PS-11
<u>The Underlier</u>		PS-17
<u>Supplemental Discussion of U.S. Federal Income Tax Consequences</u>		PS-21
<u>Supplemental Plan of Distribution: Conflicts of Interest</u>		PS-21
Product Supplement No. 1,738 dated July 10, 2017		
Summary Information		S-1
Hypothetical Returns on the Underlier-Linked Notes		S-10
Additional Risk Factors Specific to the Underlier-Linked Notes		S-30
General Terms of the Underlier-Linked Notes		S-35
Use of Proceeds		S-40
Hedging		S-40
Supplemental Discussion of Federal Income Tax Consequences		S-41
Employee Retirement Income Security Act		S-48
Supplemental Plan of Distribution		S-49
Conflicts of Interest		S-52
General Terms Supplement No. 1,734 dated July 10, 2017		
Additional Risk Factors Specific to the Notes		S-1
Supplemental Terms of the Notes		S-16
The Underliers		S-36
S&P 500® Index		S-40
MSCI Indices		S-46
Hang Seng China Enterprises Index		S-55
Russell 2000® Index		S-61
FTSE®100 Index		S-69
EURO STOXX 50® Index		S-75
TOPIX		S-82
The Dow Jones Industrial Average®		S-87
The iShares® MSCI Emerging Markets ETF		S-91

\$

GS Finance Corp.

Buffered iShares® MSCI Emerging Markets ETF-Linked Notes due

guaranteed by

Use of Proceeds	S-94
Hedging	S-94
Employee Retirement Income Security Act Supplemental Plan of Distribution	S-95
Conflicts of Interest	S-96
	S-98

The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.

Prospectus Supplement dated July 10, 2017

Use of Proceeds	S-2
Description of Notes We May Offer	S-3
Considerations Relating to Indexed Notes	S-15
United States Taxation	S-18
Employee Retirement Income Security Act Supplemental Plan of Distribution	S-19
Validity of the Notes and Guarantees	S-20
	S-21

Prospectus dated July 10, 2017

Available Information	2
Prospectus Summary	4
Risks Relating to Regulatory Resolution	
Strategies and Long-Term Debt Requirements	8
Use of Proceeds	11
Description of Debt Securities We May Offer	12
Description of Warrants We May Offer	45
Description of Units We May Offer	60
GS Finance Corp.	65
Legal Ownership and Book-Entry Issuance	67
Considerations Relating to Floating Rate Debt Securities	72
Considerations Relating to Indexed Securities	73
Considerations Relating to Securities Denominated or Payable in or Linked to a Non-U.S. Dollar Currency	74
United States Taxation	77
Plan of Distribution	92
Conflicts of Interest	94
Employee Retirement Income Security Act	95
Validity of the Securities and Guarantees	95
Experts	96
Review of Unaudited Condensed Consolidated Financial Statements by Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm	96
Cautionary Statement Pursuant to the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995	96

Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC