Statement by Eurodad representative Tove Maria Ryding at the first drafting session of the outcome document of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development

New York, 29 January 2015
Agenda item: General Discussion

Thank you, Mr Co-facilitator.

First, let me say that we welcome the Elements Paper. Although there are some issues that we believe need to be adjusted, including the structure, we are happy to see that the document (and in particular the annex) has taken us an important step closer to a real negotiating text. This is crucial, because we need to make sure that we do not waste any time.

I want to address the issue of the Global Partnership for Development. We fear that there is a dangerous confusion spreading about exactly what is meant by this term.

A global partnership for development should be based on the principle of international solidarity as enshrined in multiple international instruments, including the Declaration on Human Rights.

This principle recognises that governments are the principal duty-bearers of human rights obligations and that development assistance is essentially a fulfilment of the duty of states to assist other states to fulfil their human rights obligations.

Key elements of a global partnership for development are:

(i) a development-oriented trade regime;
(ii) ensuring external debt sustainability;
(iii) regulating financial markets;
(iv) reforming the international tax system and the international monetary system;
(v) affordable access to technology and medicines for developing countries; and
(vi) ensuring democratic global economic governance

As regards non-state actors, we do find it vital that governments should engage in partnerships with civil society organisations (CSOs), trade unions, parliaments, local authorities and the private sector.

This interaction must be founded on the principles of democratic ownership with the full engagement of all stakeholders, with specific attention to traditionally excluded stakeholder groups, including those excluded on the basis of gender. It must also be based on transparency and accountability.

When it comes to public-private partnerships, governments must establish governance, transparency and accountability systems before any such partnership is carried out. There must also be clear criteria to determine whether a specific private sector actor is fit for a public-private partnership.

However, we want to underline that the global partnership between governments must remain the central element.
We have to ensure that this type of partnership is not being confused in people’s minds to mean only partnerships with the private sector. If the obligation of governments to work together and solve global problems is suddenly phased out in favour of a new focus on public-private partnerships, and if old commitments to support each other are ignored and forgotten, we will undermine the very backbone of multilateralism and the global cooperation among states, which is so vital for achieving sustainable development.

We find that the Elements Paper conceptualises partnerships in a very narrow sense and we believe that this needs to be corrected.

Thank you very much.