

Statement by H.E. Ms. Vesna Pusić at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa

Let me first congratulate the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on organizing this historical conference and thank the country for its hospitality and the warmth with which it has certainly received our delegation, as well as everybody else, I assume, and made us feel at home here in this beautiful city of Addis Ababa.

I also want to thank the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary General of the UN, as well as Ambassadors Geir Pedersen and George Talbot for their tireless work over the past months in successfully managing to steer these complex negotiations.

Standing here on the brink of finalizing and agreeing on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, we should all be looking at the global picture. There will always be differences among each and every one of us, but this should not be an excuse and a barrier in reaching this win-win agreement.

The conference is not a pledging one; it is about financial as well as non-financial means but primarily it is about partnerships. I know you are tired and saturated by speeches so I will try to stick to the five minutes that were allotted to me and maybe use the opportunity tomorrow to elaborate on my other points. I wanted to make three points at this conference.

One is an initiative that we at home call “In Defense of Small Donors”. I say this coming from Croatia, a country that was four or five years ago at the receiving end of development assistance or development cooperation and has in the meantime become a provider of initial funds in development cooperation. Of course, it is absolutely clear that without big donors there is no development cooperation. However, this should not discourage small and poor middle-income countries from getting involved in providing initial funds for development cooperation for specific projects in the countries with which they want to cooperate and from developing themselves into countries that provide initial assistance in this relationship of development cooperation.

Among other things, small countries are important as donors if we want to create a global consensus on development cooperation as one of no more than two or three major instruments of international communication and international relations among countries. Small countries as donors are important in creating consensus and in creating experience for their own societies. It is about what it feels like to go and sit down with your partners in another country and build a nursery school or build a training hospital for midwives. This is something that doesn't require millions and billions but if you bring a sufficient number of countries in as initial providers, it will change the face not only of countries that are at the receiving end of this assistance initially, but obviously also the face of the countries that are providing the initial means.

Why am I insisting on emphasizing the initial investment? Because my second point is that development cooperation can only be understood and viewed as cooperation. Everybody profits. If it is not corrupt, if it is not arrogant, if it does

not involve hidden agendas, everybody profits – the country that provides the initial means but also the country that receives them. Nobody should be viewed as the one who is somehow giving something away without receiving something good for the country that is providing the initial sum of money itself. So cooperation understands and places development cooperation and development assistance, as it is sometimes called, on a completely different level.

And finally, my third point – and I will not elaborate on it but rather try and save it for tomorrow – was going to be that the three concepts used most often in development cooperation are money, knowledge and partnership. Which of the three is most important? I would say that 90 percent of people, when speaking straight among friends, would say: “It’s money, absolutely”, although they might emphasize partnership otherwise. However, there are countries which have received a lot of money or where a lot of it was brought in, which created a lot of havoc. Iraq is probably a case in point. So this is obviously not enough. It is important but it is not enough. Last Saturday we have just finished a conference in Dubrovnik, Croatia, on these issues specifically as preparation for the Addis conference. I will leave you with these thoughts and try to elaborate a little more on them at the round table tomorrow. Thank you.