Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following her meeting with Peruvian Foreign Minister Rafael Roncagliolo

Ministers, can I begin by saying what a privilege it is to be here in Lima. As you know, it’s my second visit here, but my first in the capacity of High Representative.

I’ve been especially pleased to come here, and I know that over the next few days you’re going to have a number of different visits from the European Union – from the Parliament, the Commission and undoubtedly from the Member States – all of them very interested in discussing with you the issues that we’ve been talking about; the issues linked to the collaboration between us.

Of the issues you mention are on the agenda today, first of all we look forward to the imminent implementation of the Trade Agreement. In discussing that today – both with the President and with you, Minister, and your colleagues, we mentioned the importance of ensuring that it is implemented in ways that benefit both of our economies. We have focused on small and medium-sized enterprises and the opportunities that this Trade Agreement – and the bilateral context we have – could have on those companies, which are the backbone of our economies and would benefit from the opportunities of being able to trade with each other.

We also talked about the importance of the social inclusion agenda. I was very pleased to spend some time with the First Lady this morning on the EUROPAN programme and to meet some of the beneficiaries of that programme: mothers and children who are getting the benefit of ensuring that children receive proper nutrition, proper support. And again Minister, in our discussions about the significance of this programme, we also recognise that helping and supporting our children, into the future, is good for them and for their families but also good for society as a whole.
As we look forward to the EU-Latin America summit later this week in Santiago and the ministerial meeting that will precede that, we are also very conscious of the regional links being developed and the important role that Peru is playing in this region. Minister, you know that I have commended the very active role that is being played – and welcome your engagement, notably as the Presidency of UNASUR. It’s very important to see you Minister, the President and all of you really promoting peace and security issues, into the future.

A final word on the environment, as we are privileged to have the Environment Minister here: this again is an area where there is a real opportunity to collaborate. Some of the challenges that are faced here are being faced in the European Union; all of the challenges that we face in terms of climate change we need to face together. And again, the leadership that is being shown here is, I think, of growing importance, if I can say this to you Minister. I know you are ambitious for the role that Peru can play and we are very keen to work as closely with you as we possibly can.

Thank you.