Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues, I’m happy to be part of these two days of testimonies of the importance of education and learning and about all the commitments to overcome the barriers that exclude those left behind in today’s educational system. During this meeting I have heard many voices about the importance of gender equality, equity and inclusion of the most marginalized and disadvantaged children and as an enabler for sustainable development. Education’s importance as a fundamental human right as well as enabler of all other rights is very much recognised.

Sweden is since long engaged in supporting education and it is now resurfacing as one of the key priorities for our development cooperation at global level. Sweden’s own development experience and lessons from around the world testify to the key role education plays in transforming societies, ensuring sustainable development and lifting individuals out of poverty.

Because of this Sweden is a dedicated supporter of GPE since 2004.

Our engagement with GPE both at global and country-level is important to link global actions with local needs. And we use this linkage to fuel our dialogue. We hope, such practice of listening to country experiences and concerns can sharpen and guide policies and plans at the global level and should be encouraged by GPE.

Today we can confidently say that GPE has made considerable progress in achieving its goals and fulfilling its mandate and made good efforts in adhering to the principles of local ownership, full-alignment to national education plans as well as partnership coordination and harmonisation. At this important financing-conference, it is key that we, all partners of GPE, continue to be committed and adhere to these principles of true partnership.
While celebrating GPE’s achievements, we need to be mindful of new and old challenges facing GPE which the partnership continuously needs to address. Some of these include:

- To keep administrative requirements on countries, lean and not flexible enough to fit country capacities.
- Any GPE reform should depart from country perspective and should consider the consequences for partner countries.

To Conclude Sweden considers GPE as a key partner in advancing the education agenda both globally and at country-level. I am glad to announce that Sweden will increase its average annual contribution to GPE by 35% compared to the last five years (from 260 MSEK/year to 350 MSEK/year). The total Swedish Pledge for the 2018-2020 financing period will be One billion 068 million SEK (about 133 MUSD).

- In the past 10 years we have provided over 2,5 billion Swedish kronor to GPE
- We continue to actively participate in the governance structure of GPE, including as a Board member
- And we are a fund manager and Grant Agent in Tanzania since 2013

Overall, we are also encouraged by the increased attention to education globally and with new financing initiatives being proposed. Non-the-less, it might be a common concern that more funding mechanisms could lead to a fragmented donor landscape and increased earmarking which may weaken country ownership and alignment. It may also lead to an even larger burden for recipient countries to respond to the requirements different funding mechanisms.