United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty
(New York, 18-28 March 2013)

Declaration by H.E. Jean-Hugues SIMON-MICHEL, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of France to the Conference on Disarmament

on behalf of the People’s Republic of China, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and France

New York, March 18th, 2013
The People’s Republic of China, France, The Russian Federation, The United Kingdom and the United States recall their longstanding position that an Arms Trade Treaty would constitute a major step in reinforcing international peace and security.

We have come a long way in this step-by-step process to formulate an Arms Trade Treaty from the first United Nations General Assembly resolution in 2006 to the Group of Governmental Experts in 2008, through the Open-Ended Working Groups and Preparatory Committees from 2009 to 2012, to the Diplomatic Conference in July 2012, and this Final UN Conference on an Arms Trade Treaty.

We have made progress during these stages of the ATT process. The 26th July text is a reflection of international efforts to find common ground and contains some compromises that it is essential to preserve. During these nine days we will engage actively to improve the 26th July text. Our common goal remains to reach consensus.

Our objective remains the same: an ATT that is simple, short, and easy to implement, and at the same time sets the highest possible common standards by which states will regulate the international transfer of conventional arms. An effective ATT should not hinder the legitimate arms trade or the legitimate right to self defense under the UN Charter. It should help curb the illicit trafficking in conventional weapons that undermines peace, security and prosperity. It should create a shared responsibility in the international transfer of conventional arms between all states, be they exporters, importers, transit or transshipment states.

The core requirement of an ATT is for State Parties to establish and/or maintain effective national systems of control over the international transfer of conventional arms. The authorization or denial of any international conventional arms transfer will remain the sole responsibility and right of the sovereign state. In deciding whether to authorize an international transfer of conventional arms each State Party shall examine, inter alia, specific criteria. We agree with the approach of the 26th July text of having the scope of the ATT be as broad as can be implemented in practice, with each State establishing and maintaining a national control list as defined on a national basis. The broadest range of conventional arms and relevant activities included in the international trade of conventional arms should be captured.

We have full confidence in the guidance and stewardship of the President of the Conference, Ambassador Peter Woolcott, and hope his inclusive and transparent method will allow us to draw our work to a successful conclusion.

Our delegations will continue to provide views on the ATT as we move forwards to the end of this Conference and, hopefully, the successful conclusion by consensus of our task./.