Statement by the Chinese Delegation
at the General Debate of
United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty
Mr. President,

At the outset, please allow me, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) Diplomatic Conference. I am confident that with your wisdom and diplomatic experience, you will surely guide this Conference smoothly and in an impartial, objective and balanced manner. The Chinese delegation would like to assure you of its full support and cooperation.

Mr. President,

The international security situation continues to undergo profound and complex changes. The global security issue has now become increasingly prominent. Traditional and non-traditional security threats are intertwined. There remains a long way to go in building a world secure for all. All states need to work together, share weal and woe and pursue a win-win situation, so as to meet the common security challenges confronting mankind.

The regional instability and humanitarian crisis caused by illegal trafficking and abuse of conventional arms, especially small arms and light weapons (SALWs) has increasingly raised universal concerns of the international community. During the past 6 years, the international community has worked relentlessly to solve this
issue, and some progress has been made. This Diplomatic Conference constitutes parts and parcel of that effort.

Mr. President,

The history of arms control treaty negotiation has shown that, to achieve a desired final outcome by consensus, all parties should move toward the same direction by showing full cooperation and flexibility and seriously addressing each others' positions and concerns. In order to negotiate and conclude a treaty within a month, we need to firstly achieve consensus on principle issues. China holds that:

Firstly, the primary objective of an ATT is to prevent and combat illicit arms trade and maintain global and regional stability by regulating arms trade. Meanwhile, states' right to legal arms trade and self-defence should not be compromised.

Secondly, since legal arms trade has a direct bearing on the political, security and economic interests of all states, as well as their needs for national defence, an ATT should address the legitimate interests of states and the humanitarian concerns in a balanced manner.

Thirdly, an ATT should be universal, objective and non-discriminatory. The treaty shall not be misused for political purposes to interfere with the normal arms trade and internal affairs of any state.

Fourthly, an ATT should aim at urging states to establish their effective national regulating and control mechanism and enhance relevant capacity building on arms trade, while fully respecting the sovereign rights of all states to make their own arms trade decisions in accordance with the principles and criteria of the treaty.
Mr. President,

In the coming month, all delegations will negotiate the concrete issues related to the Treaty. I would like to highlight China’s basic stance on several important issues of the Treaty:

Regarding the scope. The scope of ATT should be defined properly by covering as a priority those conventional arms that have been clearly defined internationally and accepted universally. We have to bear in mind that the best is the enemy of the good. It is essential to conclude an ATT for regulating the international arms trade, but it could be unhelpful to introduce too many debatable items and transaction activities into the scope for achieving an ATT as early as possible.

Regarding the criteria. Criteria are important references for states to consider in making arms trade decisions, but the states still have the sovereign rights to decide whether to give green light or not to a certain arms trade transaction. China upholds that the criteria should be objective, balanced, realistic and feasible, excluding any political, controversial or discriminatory elements.

Regarding the implementation mechanism. This mechanism should ensure the comprehensive and effective fulfillment of the Treaty, avoiding interference with states' sovereign decisions. To regulate the international arms trade, it is of great importance for all states to establish effective national regulatory mechanism and build related capabilities. Cooperation among states, including establishing related mechanisms should be conducive to the above-mentioned goal. Only through this, can a future ATT be widely supported and effectively implemented.

Regarding the transparency. China is not against proper transparent measures such as establishing international register on conventional arms and sharing information on arms trade. Meanwhile, China is
of the view that, as arms trade is closely linked to national security, relevant measures should strike an appropriate balance between transparency and national security. Clean-cut transparency measures may not suit all.

Mr. President,

The Chinese Government has all along been taking a prudent and responsible attitude toward arms exports, and exercising strict controls on such exports in accordance with its domestic laws and regulations, and its international obligations. China supports international efforts in taking proper measures to regulate international arms trade and combat illicit arms trafficking. China has been actively taking part in the process of negotiating an ATT in a responsible manner. China attaches great importance to this Diplomatic Conference and is willing to make every effort together with all parties in negotiating and concluding a treaty feasible and acceptable for all.

Thank you, Mr. President.