Statement by Ambassador Paul Beijer of Sweden at ATT-signing ceremony
June 3, 2013

Mr Chairman/Madame Chair,

The opening of the Arms Trade Treaty for signature is an important event for the United Nations, and for the millions of people around the world who today are experiencing the suffering and dislocation caused by armed conflict and armed violence. It marks the beginning of a new chapter in the effort to stem the tide of arms that since the end of the Cold War has so decisively contributed to that suffering and dislocation. The adoption of this Treaty sends the message that the international community will no longer tolerate the unregulated, or irresponsible or illegal trade in arms.

The Treaty is an important step, but only the first step in a long journey. Because if we want to see the positive effects of this instrument, we will need to work hard to ensure that it has as close to universal adherence as we can achieve, and that it is implemented in an effective way. Universal adherence is a reasonable goal because even the smallest Member State of the United Nations has a role to play in controlling the flow of arms. One does not have to be a major producer and exporter of arms to unwittingly become a major player in the illegal transfer of arms. It is enough to have gaps in national legislation and patchy enforcement of what there is. Therefore we all have a role to play in ensuring effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty. Some by putting adequate legislation in place and reinforcing institutions, and others by sharing experiences from long-established control systems and supporting legislative and institution-building efforts.

Mr Chairman/Madame Chair,

Sweden looks forward to working with all partners in realizing the aims of the Arms Trade Treaty, and pays tribute to all those in government and civil society who made the Treaty possible, and in particular to Ambassador Roberto Garcia Moritán of Argentina who successfully guided the negotiating process for many years, and to Ambassador Peter Woolcott of Australia and his team, who achieved its conclusion.

Thank you