Mr Chair, Dear Colleagues,

My country fully subscribes to the European Union’s statement.

Permit me to begin by congratulating you on your appointment as Chair of the Conference. You can be assured of my country’s support for its success.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime. Our priority is its consolidation. This of course means for France that we should fully implement the roadmap established by the action plan which was adopted by consensus in 2010. This very approach, which is balanced between the three pillars and calls on States to undertake concrete, progressive actions, will allow us to make progress to create the conditions for a world-without nuclear weapons, in accordance with the goals of the NPT, in a way that promotes international stability and on the basis of undiminished security for all. This is the only realistic and effective avenue for multilateral disarmament.

Mr Chair,

This Second Session of the Preparatory Committee is primarily marked by the worsening of proliferation crises. Firstly, Iran which, as shown by the latest IAEA report of the Director general to the Board of Governors, is relentlessly pursuing activities banned by several Security Council and IAEA Board of Governors Resolutions. Despite the efforts of the E3+3 Group, Iran has also preferred not to follow up proposals formulated during our recent meetings with it in Almaty. It is more urgent than ever for the country to accept to make concrete gestures to give diplomacy more time to find a long-term solution to this crisis. North Korea is also source of major concerns: following the launch of a long-range missile in December 2012 and its third nuclear test in February 2013, condemned respectively by Resolutions 2087 and 2094 of the United Nations Security Council, Pyongyang is engaging in bellicose escalations, threatening South Korea, Japan and the United States. This attitude is unacceptable. Vigilance should be maintained, as well as pressure on the country. Moreover, France continues to call for full light to be shed on Syria’s past and present nuclear activities, taking into account the development of the current political situation.

These crises are major threats to international and regional stability and security. This is an obstacle to the development of civil nuclear cooperation projects. By undermining mutual
confidence, it obstructs disarmament. These worsening crises make decisions more necessary than ever on the consequences of proven non-compliance with the Treaty and abuse of the “right to withdraw”. This cycle must seize this issue. Working papers on withdrawal have been put on the table and I will come back to this point.

Mr Chair,

**Concerning nuclear disarmament. France will continue to fully shoulder its particular responsibilities as a nuclear-weapon-State.** Last year, we met the target of reducing the air component of our deterrence force by one third. This complements the considerable established achievements such as reducing the size of the arsenal by half in 20 years; fully dismantling the land component of our deterrence force and reducing the naval component by one third; transparency on the number of nuclear warheads – there are less than 300 – and unilateral, complete and irreversible dismantling of our nuclear tests site and production facilities for nuclear weapons fissile material.

Along with the four other nuclear-weapon-States, we met at a high level during the Paris and Washington conferences in 2011 and 2012, then again in Geneva at the initiative of the Russian Federation on 18-19 February. These conferences made essential exchanges possible to strengthen mutual confidence and work together on nuclear terminology, verification and transparency and reporting actions.

We have also made progress on the matter of nuclear-weapon-free zones. As you know, France is already a party to the relevant protocols of the Rarotonga, Tlatelolco and Pelindaba Treaties. Last September, we signed two parallel declarations with Mongolia on the nuclear-weapon-free status of the country. We hope the Protocol to the Bangkok Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone will be signed as soon as possible. Lastly, we are going to resume consultations with the States Parties to the Semipalatinsk Treaty on the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, with a view to identifying acceptable legal solutions for all parties to allow ratification of the protocol.

Multilaterally, our priority is to do everything possible to make progress on the matter of a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT). This negotiation has been delayed too long. This is why we supported General Assembly Resolution 67/53, adopted with a very large majority, to move forward with talks. We will make a substantial national contribution to the Secretary-General’s report in the coming weeks, and we call on all the States Parties to the NPT to do the same. We will participate in the Group of Governmental Experts. France considers that following this process, the negotiations must be held in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr Chair,

The objective of a world without nuclear weapons cannot be decreed in the abstract, without taking the international strategic context into account. The conditions of achieving such a world must be the outcome of gradual and collective work, guided by concrete measures. Undermining existing forums, such as this one, by creating parallel processes, and calling into question the step-by-step approach of the 2010 Action Plan, as certain recent initiatives appear to try to, will not advance nuclear disarmament.
Mr Chair,

All States which scrupulously meet their international obligations and pursue civil nuclear programmes in good faith must be able to benefit from the peaceful applications of the atom.

Many countries continue to develop their nuclear programs. Two years after the Fukushima accident, it must come along with additional vigilance.

My country is firmly committed to promoting responsible development of civil nuclear applications, responsible development which means under the best safety, security and non-proliferation conditions, and with respect for the environment.

Regarding nuclear safety, France attaches particular importance to the full implementation of the IAEA Action Plan and strengthening the international framework, concerning promotion of transparency and peer review, improving rapid response mechanisms in case of accident and strengthening the international civil nuclear liability regime.

Regarding nuclear security, France remains fully committed to the implementation of the commitments made during the Nuclear Security Summits in Washington and Seoul, and is participating actively in preparing the Hague Summit. On this point, I would like to point out that France recently ratified the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and is making the entry into force of this instrument one of its priorities.

Lastly, I know that our partners in the Middle East were deeply disappointed by the postponement of the conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. This conference was one of the major measures of the 2010 Final Document. However, the Cycle is not over, and the facilitator, Jaakko Laajava, has until now produced remarkable work to create the favourable conditions to hold the conference as soon as possible with all stakeholders. This is an important achievement which we must build on. We feel that these opportunities need to be seized to advance the process.

Mr Chairman,

You can count on my support, and that of my delegation, to assist you in your task.