**ITU**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
STYLE GUIDE**

**English Language Section**

**Conferences and Publications Department**

**Last updated: 9 November 2023**

**An up-to-date electronic copy of this Style Guide is available at** [**https://www.itu.int/en/language-tools/Pages/default.aspx**](https://www.itu.int/en/language-tools/Pages/default.aspx)

**Scatter chart, qr code

Description automatically generated**

|  |
| --- |
| **Main changes in this update**   * Update on gender-neutral language and the use of the term “chair” * New section: “Compass points” * Additions to the word list in annex. |

|  |
| --- |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS |
| This style guide, which is intended for internal use only, draws on a number of similar works produced by other organizations of the United Nations system, and in particular the United Nations Editorial Manual; the ILO House Style Manual; the IAEA Style Manual for Publications and Documents in English; and the WHO Editorial Style Manual. |

TABLE OF CONTENTS Page

[FOREWORD 1](#_Toc143085045)

[WRITTEN STYLE 1](#_Toc143085046)

[SPELLING 1](#_Toc143085047)

[Standard spelling 1](#_Toc143085048)

[Words ending in -ize, -ise and -yse 1](#_Toc143085049)

[Alternative spelling 1](#_Toc143085050)

[Telecommunication(s) 1](#_Toc143085051)

[ICT(s) 2](#_Toc143085052)

[Compounds 2](#_Toc143085053)

[Formation of plurals 2](#_Toc143085054)

[Foreign words and expressions 2](#_Toc143085055)

[HYPHENS 3](#_Toc143085056)

[General principles 3](#_Toc143085057)

[Permanent hyphens 3](#_Toc143085058)

[Temporary hyphens 4](#_Toc143085059)

[PUNCTUATION 5](#_Toc143085060)

[Lists 5](#_Toc143085061)

[Spaces around punctuation 5](#_Toc143085062)

[The Oxford comma 5](#_Toc143085063)

[ADJECTIVES 6](#_Toc143085064)

[Position and meaning of certain adjectives 6](#_Toc143085065)

[NUMBERS 7](#_Toc143085066)

[General rule 7](#_Toc143085067)

[Spelling 7](#_Toc143085068)

[Exceptions and specific cases 7](#_Toc143085069)

[Dates 8](#_Toc143085070)

[Periods of time or ranges of numbers 8](#_Toc143085071)

[Decimals, fractions and percentages 8](#_Toc143085072)

[Ordinals 9](#_Toc143085073)

[Series of numbers to which different rules apply 9](#_Toc143085074)

[Two numbers occurring together 9](#_Toc143085075)

[Votes 9](#_Toc143085076)

[References to numbered provisions in statutory documents 9](#_Toc143085077)

[PROPER NAMES 10](#_Toc143085078)

[Names of countries 10](#_Toc143085079)

[Names of other geographical areas/territories 11](#_Toc143085080)

[Other geographical names 11](#_Toc143085081)

[Names of organizations 11](#_Toc143085082)

[Names of ITU conferences 12](#_Toc143085083)

[Instruments of the Union 12](#_Toc143085084)

[Forms of address and titles 13](#_Toc143085085)

[CAPITALIZATION 14](#_Toc143085086)

[General rule 14](#_Toc143085087)

[Official titles 14](#_Toc143085088)

[References to documents, texts, publications, and divisions and subdivisions thereof 15](#_Toc143085089)

[If in doubt, use lower case 16](#_Toc143085090)

[Capitalized titles 16](#_Toc143085091)

[Compass points 16](#_Toc143085092)

[Always capitalized 17](#_Toc143085093)

[Not capitalized (except when grammar requires) 18](#_Toc143085094)

[Special cases 18](#_Toc143085095)

[ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS 19](#_Toc143085096)

[General principles 19](#_Toc143085097)

[Plurals of abbreviations 20](#_Toc143085098)

[Use of articles with abbreviations 20](#_Toc143085099)

[Punctuation in abbreviations 20](#_Toc143085100)

[Abbreviation of dates and times 21](#_Toc143085101)

[Currency units 21](#_Toc143085102)

[ITU structure and abbreviations designating structural units 21](#_Toc143085103)

[Domain names 21](#_Toc143085104)

[Use of the ampersand (“&”) 21](#_Toc143085105)

[LAYOUT 22](#_Toc143085106)

[Templates 22](#_Toc143085107)

[Numbering of paragraphs 22](#_Toc143085108)

[Titles and headings 22](#_Toc143085109)

[Lists 22](#_Toc143085110)

[Neutral order in lists 24](#_Toc143085111)

[Footnotes/bibliographies 25](#_Toc143085112)

[Use of “etc.” in lists 25](#_Toc143085113)

[RESOLUTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, DECISIONS AND OPINIONS 26](#_Toc143085114)

[Resolutions, recommendations, decisions and opinions of conferences,   
assemblies and so forth 26](#_Toc143085115)

[Numbering of resolutions and decisions of conferences/assemblies 26](#_Toc143085116)

[Specific editorial rules for resolutions 27](#_Toc143085117)

[ITU-R and ITU-T Recommendations 27](#_Toc143085118)

[NON-DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE 28](#_Toc143085119)

[Gender-neutral language 28](#_Toc143085120)

[Disability-inclusive and non-stigmatizing language 29](#_Toc143085121)

[CORRESPONDENCE 30](#_Toc143085122)

[FORMULAS TO BE USED WHEN DRAFTING AND TYPING OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE 31](#_Toc143085123)

[Annex A ITU Word list 32](#_Toc143085124)

# FOREWORD

The purpose of this style guide is to codify the practices that have grown up within ITU in the drafting of texts in English, in order to facilitate the work of authors, assistants, keyboard operators, translators, editors and proofreaders, ensure uniformity of English documents in ITU and eliminate unnecessary corrections at each successive stage in the preparation of documents or publications.

The rules are not intended to be a guide to the writing of good English; readers seeking such a guide are referred to the standard works listed in the section on written style.

Nor are the rules intended to put authors in a straitjacket; the principles suggested may sometimes have to be waived on grounds of appropriateness or common sense. The most important point to bear in mind is that usage should be consistent throughout a document or set of documents.

The guide is certainly not exhaustive. On the contrary, a deliberate effort has been made to keep it concise, simple, easy to refer to, and even readable. The points covered are those on which the English Language Section receives frequent questions and queries.

The guide is posted on the ITU website:

• internal access: <https://intranet.itu.int/gs/cpd/Documents/styleguide.docx>

• external access: at [https://www.itu.int/en/language-tools/Documents/styleguide.docx](http://www.itu.int/en/language-tools/Documents/styleguide.docx)

and will be constantly updated. Any suggestions for additions or improvements are welcome, and should be submitted to the English Language Section (e-mail: [christine.ferrie-tenconi@itu.int](mailto:christine.ferrie-tenconi@itu.int)).

For items not covered in this guide, the reader may also wish to refer to the United Nations Editorial Manual, at https://www.un.org/dgacm/en/content/editorial-manual.

# WRITTEN STYLE

It is important that ITU publications, records and other documents should be written in clear, simple language and without ambiguity, not least because they will be read by many people whose native language is not English and much of the material will be translated into the other official languages.

It is assumed that the users of this style guide have a good knowledge of English style and usage. There are, however, numerous standard works on written style and English usage, including:

• H.W. Fowler, *A dictionary of modern English usage*

• Sir Ernest Gowers, *The complete plain words*

• *The Economist pocket style book*

• E. Partridge, *Usage and abusage*.

A short and informative brochure, *How to write clearly*, prepared as part of the European Union’s ongoing “Clear Writing Campaign”, may be found at:

<https://bookshop.europa.eu/en/home/> (on this page, search for “How to write clearly”).

# SPELLING

## Standard spelling[[1]](#footnote-1)1

In line with current United Nations practice, the spelling given in the online [*Oxford Premium Dictionaries (English)*](https://premium.oxforddictionaries.com/english/) (make sure to select English (UK) spelling) or the latest print edition (12th) of the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* should generally be followed. Where alternative forms are given in those dictionaries, the preferred spelling should be used. The preferred spelling is the one which is presented first (e.g. “adviser (also advisor)”: use “adviser”) or to which the reader is referred (e.g. “tire”, US variant of tyre: use “tyre”).

For ITU exceptions and words that often cause difficulty, see the ITU word list in Annex A.

The online English dictionary at Oxford Premium Dictionaries is one of many online resources available through the ITU library (see the library’s e-resources at <https://libraryguides.itu.int/az.php?t=19851>). Full access to those e‑resources is restricted to users connected to the ITU network.

## Words ending in -ize, -ise and -yse

Where there is a choice between using the suffix -ize or -ise (e.g. organize, liberalization, standardization, harmonize), -ize, derived from the Greek -*izo*, is preferred, in accordance with the first spelling of such words given in the above-mentioned Oxford dictionaries.

Note that for some words, where -ise is not a suffix but part of the root of the word, there is no choice and -ise must be used (e.g. surprise, comprise, enterprise, improvise, advertise, franchise). Similarly, ‑yse must be used for words derived from the Greek *lusis* (as in analyse, dialyse and hydrolyse). Common words of this type are given in the ITU word list in Annex A.

## Alternative spelling

Some words are spelled differently according to meaning (e.g. work programme, *but* computer program).

## Telecommunication(s)

The words “telecommunications” and “telecommunication” are both correct, and are used more or less interchangeably throughout the world, according to regional and author preference.

In ITU, for the sake of standardization, the following rule is adopted:

• Noun: “telecommunications”:

e.g. “The role of telecommunications for development”

• Adjective: “telecommunication”:

e.g. “Telecommunication equipment is becoming more affordable”.

## ICT(s)

In ITU, the standard term is “information and communication technology” or “information and communication technologies” (i.e. not “communications”).

Both the abbreviations “ICT” and “ICTs” can be used as nouns. However, when used as an adjective, grammar dictates that only “ICT” is permissible (e.g. “ICT applications”, not “ICTs applications”).

## Compounds

Unfortunately, there are no hard-and-fast rules governing the use of compounds (words formed from two or more other words), which may be written as a single word (e.g. radiocommunication), with a hyphen (e.g. time‑limit) or as two separate words (e.g. side lobe). Language is always evolving, the general trend being towards consolidation in a single word as compounds become gradually more familiar (e.g. downlink used to be written in two words and worldwide used to be hyphenated, but they are now consolidated). Some of the more common compounds are given in the ITU word list in Annex A.

## Formation of plurals

For foreign words which have been assimilated into English and which have alternative plural forms, the English form is to be preferred (e.g. forums, stadiums). In some cases, the choice of plural is governed by the particular sense in which the word is used (e.g. antennae [of insects], antennas [of radios]; formulae [mathematical], formulas [general]; indices [in mathematics], indexes [in books]). Commonly encountered plurals of this kind are given in the ITU word list in Annex A, and in the above-mentioned Oxford dictionaries.

It is acceptable to use “data” in both singular and plural forms, i.e. “the data were collected and classified” or “the data was collected over a number of years” (see above-mentioned Oxford dictionaries for examples of usage).

When referring to BR, TSB and BDT, the plural of “Bureau” is always “Bureaux” (*not* Bureaus).

## Foreign words and expressions

Foreign words and expressions are usually italicized (e.g. *inter alia*, *fait accompli*, *force majeure*, *per se*) in English texts. However, those which are considered to have been adopted into the language are printed in Roman type (e.g. ad hoc, note verbale, curriculum vitae, per capita, vice versa, laissez-passer).

Commonly encountered foreign words and expressions are given in the ITU word list in Annex A, showing whether they are italicized or printed in Roman type in ITU texts. In all other cases, follow the above-mentioned Oxford dictionaries.

# HYPHENS

## General principles

Hyphens are used to connect words that are more closely linked to each other than to the surrounding syntax. Their use should be kept to a minimum, a hyphen being introduced only when one is necessary or useful to avoid ambiguity or hesitation. The rest of this section is devoted to the elaboration of this general rule.

## Permanent hyphens

As indicated in the section on spelling, some compound words have permanent hyphens (e.g. Secretary‑General, time‑limit, policy-maker).

In line with the trend towards consolidation, most prefixes and combining forms should not be separated from the next word by a hyphen (e.g. subregion, multipath, repatriate, extracurricular, interregional, semiconductor, tripartite, bilateral, microcomputer, preselection, copolar, postdated, antisocial, cybersecurity). There are, however, quite a number of exceptions, including the following:

a) the prefixes non-, self-, quasi- or ex- (in the sense of “formerly”): e.g. non‑geostationary, self‑sufficient, quasi‑linear, ex‑boss;

b) when the prefix or combining form ends with a vowel and the next word begins with the same vowel or a “y”: e.g. pre‑eminent, micro‑organism, semi‑intensive, multi‑year (but see NB below about “cooperation”);

c) so as to avoid any awkward or misleading juxtapositions of letters: e.g. co‑worker;

d) to distinguish between similarly spelled words with different meanings: e.g. re‑count (meaning count a second time, as opposed to recount meaning narrate);

e) when the next word begins with a capital letter: e.g. sub‑Saharan, inter‑American, pan‑African.

NB: many words formed with a prefix in the above categories have become so common and familiar that they are now treated as a single unit and no longer follow the general pattern (e.g. cooperation, coordination).

The growing number of words beginning with the prefix “e-” (for “electronic”) should be hyphenated (e-commerce, e-health, e-government, e-business, e-learning, etc.). To remain consistent with this rule, the word “e-mail” should also be written with a hyphen in ITU texts. Nonetheless, for established names/organizations/events/applications/documents, the original spelling should be maintained, (e.g. eMIFR, eValidation).

On the other hand, the growing number of words beginning with the prefix “cyber” are not hyphenated (cyberattack, cybercrime, cybercommunity, cybersecurity, cyberspace, cyberterrorism, cyberwar, etc.). Note however the commonly used exceptions to this rule: “cyber affair”, “cyber issue” and “cyber-related”.

Nor are words beginning with the prefix “tele” hyphenated, unless the first letter of the root word is a vowel (telemedicine, telework, telematics; *but* tele-education).

For the hyphenation of commonly encountered words, see the ITU word list in Annex A.

## Temporary hyphens

In a compound adjectival expression used attributively, the temporary hyphen is used to join together two or more words which would normally be written separately, in order to avoid ambiguity or hesitation:

next-generation network light-blue coat labour-intensive industry  
 first-class results man-eating tiger better-trained staff  
 up-to-date information part-time work cost-benefit ratio

In some cases a hyphen can substantially change the meaning of an expression (compare: “thirty‑odd participants” and “thirty odd participants”).

Note, however, that it is better to omit hyphens from lengthy adjectival expressions (“space station antenna side lobe pattern”) and better still to avoid them by redrafting.

In a series of two or more compound words, pendant hyphens are permissible (e.g. two-, three- and four-year periods; cost- and staff-reduction programme). It is often possible, however, to avoid them by redrafting (e.g. periods of two, three and four years) or simply repeating the common base (e.g. cost-reduction and staff-reduction programme).

No hyphen is used, unless omission would give rise to ambiguity or hesitation, when:

a) the first word of a compound adjectival expression is an adverb ending in -ly:

readily available data partially implemented project highly contentious issue

b) the expression is derived from a proper name:

the New York cable infrastructure Latin American telecommunication operators

c) the expression consists of a foreign-language expression not normally hyphenated:

ad hoc group per diem allowance ex officio member

*but*: laissez-faire policy.

No hyphen is used in compound adjectival expressions used predicatively:

better-prepared experts, but: these experts are better prepared  
 up-to-date documents, but: bring the document up to date  
 part-time work, but: request to work part time  
 gender-neutral language, but: the text should be gender neutral.

# PUNCTUATION

Since the reader of this style guide is assumed to have a good knowledge of the English language, basic punctuation is not covered in detail.

However, an overview of the use of punctuation marks may be found in an appendix to the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* and also in the *Oxford Premium Dictionaries (English*) at [Punctuation - Oxford Dictionaries](https://premium.oxforddictionaries.com/words/punctuation).

## Lists

The specific case of punctuation in lists, bullet points and suchlike is addressed in the section on layout.

## Spaces around punctuation

Full stops, commas, colons and semicolons are followed (but not preceded) by a single space.

No spaces are used around hyphens, e.g. “time-sensitive content”, “902-908 MHz”.

## The Oxford comma

The Oxford comma is a comma inserted in a list of items just before the final conjunction (“A, B, C, and D”). At ITU, it is used where needed to avoid ambiguity or otherwise aid comprehension.

Some sentences do nicely without it: “ITU conferences adopt resolutions, decisions and opinions” and “Ratification, acceptance or approval of the Constitution is deemed to constitute consent to be bound thereby”.

By contrast, in the following sentence the Oxford comma helps avoid ambiguity: “In country X, the ministries responsible for telecommunications, trade, finance and budget, and industry have jointly developed a strategy to combat counterfeiting” (“finance and budget” are one ministry, “industry” is another).

# ADJECTIVES

## Position and meaning of certain adjectives

There are some adjectives which can occur either before or after a noun, but the position they occur in has an effect on their meaning, e.g.:

🞄 the concerned parents (= the parents who are worried)  
the parents concerned (= the parents who are involved/mentioned)

🞄 an involved argument (= an argument which is intricate or complicated)  
the argument involved (= the argument which is germane to the issue)

🞄 the present situation (= the situation which exists now)  
the people present (= the people who are here/there)

🞄 a responsible person (= a person who is sensible/reliable)  
the person responsible (= the person who has responsibility for something).

Hence, in ITU, we should write, for example:

🞄 in collaboration with the study groups concerned  
(*not* “the concerned study groups”)

🞄 all the participants involved  
(*not* “the involved participants”).

# NUMBERS

## General rule[[2]](#footnote-2)2

Whole numbers from zero to nine should be spelled out in full in the body of the text:

“The conference, attended by 155 delegates, adopted two resolutions, five decisions and nine reports.”

## Spelling

A hyphen is used when a number above 20 is spelled out, and also between the numerator and denominator of spelled-out fractions (unless the denominator is already hyphenated):

twenty-three two hundred and sixty-eight  
 two-thirds two twenty-sixths.

## Exceptions and specific cases

Figures should always be used before “million”, “billion” and “trillion”, and for dates and times of day, percentages, ratios, units of money or measurement (except when they are obviously intended to be approximate or when they occur in isolated references in a non-technical context), and page references, serial numbers and the like:

3 million 6 June 1984 2 p.m.  
 10 Mbit/s CHF 400 3 km  
 7 MHz page 5 Chapter 4  
 Figure 2 example 6 8 per cent.

Note, however, that a number that forms the first word of a sentence should be spelled out regardless of the above rules (e.g. “Two hundred and eighty-five courses were given in 1998”). Ugly examples can usually be avoided by redrafting (e.g. “The year 1980 was one of solid achievement” *not* “Nineteen eighty was a year …”).

In standard texts, numbers consisting of four or more figures do not take a comma, but a space (e.g. 6 590 kHz, 1 500 assignments, 23 027 957 main lines),[[3]](#footnote-3)3 except in references to provisions or pages (RR1660, p. 1231), dates (1998) and serial numbers of texts or instruments (Council Resolution 1140, Decree 1277).

Round millions and billions should be written as follows: 27 million (also, as convenient, 6.5 billion, 2.35 million – no more than two decimal places). Otherwise, figures are used in line with the normal rule: 3 426 000, 2 203 750.

The word “billion” is now accepted in both American and British usage as meaning 1 000 million. If there is any risk of doubt, consider using figures.

## Dates

Dates follow the pattern 17 January 1958.

Care must be taken when abbreviating dates, since expressions such as “02/10/94” can be ambiguous, meaning 2 October 1994 to a British reader and 10 February 1994 to an American reader. It is recommended to avoid ambiguous forms (but note that the formal reference to a BR IFIC has the form “BR IFIC 1234/03.12.2022”).

Spell out centuries (e.g. the twentieth century; the mid-nineteenth century), but when referring to decades use the following forms, without an apostrophe in either case: in the early twenties, in the late 1980s.

Time of day expressed in four figures, using the 24-hour system, is written without punctuation, e.g. 2100 hours (*not* 21.00 or 21:00 hours). This format is used in ITU minutes and summary records.

References to the time of day using the 12-hour system should be made as follows: 9 a.m. (*not* 9.00 a.m. or 9AM), noon, 1.15 p.m., 3 p.m., 9.05 p.m. (*not* 9.5 p.m.), midnight.

## Periods of time or ranges of numbers

For periods of time or ranges of numbers, either a hyphen or “from … to …” may be used, but not a combination of the two:

13 360-13 410 kHz 4 950-4 990 MHz 94.1-100 GHz

pp. 17-18 paras. 19-21 2-4 per cent

1914-18 1994-1998 6-10 May 1996

from 1914 to 1918 from 1994 to 1998 from 6 to 10 May 1996

but *not* **“**from 6-10 May 1996” or “between 1994-1998”.

## Decimals, fractions and percentages

Decimal fractions below unity should be preceded by a zero, both in running text and in tables, figures, etc., e.g.:

0.3 per cent 0.5°E.

Vulgar fractions below unity should be spelled out if figures are not required by the rules set out above and if the resulting text is not unduly cumbersome:

one-tenth, one twenty-fifth, one and a half, two-thirds

but

3½ inches, 19 17/52 (or 27/365ths).

Except in technical or statistical contexts, use “per cent” rather than “%”, unless use of the symbol is necessary for reasons of space, e.g. in tables. In ratios of x:100 and x:1 000, the formula “per 100” or “per 1 000” (*not* per thousand) should be used, e.g. “a teledensity of 4.4 main lines per 100 inhabitants” or “23.7 industrial accidents per 1 000 employees”.

## Ordinals

Ordinal numbers are spelled out up to and including “ninth”; figures are used from “10th” onwards, except when reference is made to centuries:

Eighth session, 14th session, 171st session

The ninth reason is that …

In the nineteenth century.

The ordinal suffix (i.e. st, nd, rd or th) is written as a superscript. This is often handled automatically by word-processing software.

## Series of numbers to which different rules apply

When two or more numbers to which different rules apply occur in a series, referring to the same thing, the rule applying to the higher or highest number should apply to all (e.g. “14, previously 9” *not* “14, previously nine”).

## Two numbers occurring together

When two numbers occur together, they should be expressed in different styles, according to the nature of the elements and the context (e.g. twenty 15-cent stamps; 120 fifteen-cent stamps; five 15‑year-old boys; 20 three-year-old girls; 12 ten-foot poles).

## Votes

The results of voting are always expressed in figures (e.g. “The resolution was passed by 45 votes to 13, with 5 abstentions”).

## References to numbered provisions in statutory documents

Use “No.” or “Nos.” when referring to provisions of the ITU Constitution and Convention or the Radio Regulations, e.g. “No. 111 of the Radio Regulations”, “RR Nos. 19.45-19.52” (unless referring to the entire article, e.g. “Article 21 of the Radio Regulations”).

NB: when referring to provisions under the articles of the Appendices to the Radio Regulations, a section marker (§) should be used, followed by a space, instead of “No.”, e.g. § 4.1 of Article 4 of RR Appendix 30A and §§ 4.1.16-4.1.18.

When referring to ITU texts, “No.” should be omitted after words like document, resolution, report (e.g. Document 10, Resolution 6).

However, use “No.” when referring to the documents, reports and recommendations of other organizations and in the titles of laws, where appropriate, to accurately reflect the original wording.

“No.” should not be used when referring to BR IFICs, e.g. BR IFIC 2975/12.07.2022.

# PROPER NAMES

# Names of countries

For political reasons, care must be taken when referring to names of countries. Each Member State selects two variants – a long name for official use (e.g. People’s Republic of China) and a short name for routine use (e.g. China) – in the six official languages. These names are used to the exclusion of all others. In particular, abbreviations such as UAE, UK and US/USA should not be used in formal documents unless constraints of space impose it. The official designations are given in the List of ITU Member States Official Designations at <https://www.itu.int/online/mm/scripts/gensel28>. Note that in some cases these designations diverge from those used by the United Nations Secretariat.

This list also contains the official country codes for all Member States (e.g. F for France, E for Spain, RUS for Russian Federation) which are used in ITU service documents such as BR faxes.

It is customary to use the short form of country names in ITU minutes and summary records (Council, PP, RRB and WRC). Note, in particular, these short forms for the following countries:

Plurinational State of Bolivia

Republic of the Congo

Republic of Korea (not “South Korea”)

Russian Federation

Islamic Republic of Iran

Syrian Arab Republic

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (not “North Korea”).

When referring to a country using the short form in running text and titles of documents, the country names given in the official list above should be written out in full without any brackets or abbreviations, i.e.:

“Republic of the Congo” rather than “Rep. of the Congo”

“Dominican Republic” rather than “Dominican Rep.”

“Republic of Nepal” rather than “Nepal (Republic of)”

*but* Lao P.D.R.

The definite article should be used in running text and titles where grammar dictates (e.g. “from the Republic of Croatia”), including for the short form of countries whose names are plural, composite or preceded by the article by agreed convention. The official designations in the list maintained by SPM do not always reflect this, so follow United Nations practice as laid down in the UNTERM country records, i.e. use the article for the short name of the Comoros, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the Sudan, etc., but not for Maldives, Seychelles or Solomon Islands.

Adjectives of nationality (e.g. Beninese, Cameroonian, Togolese), names of a country’s official languages, ethnonyms, etc., can be found in the country records in UNTERM at <https://unterm.un.org>.

In lists of countries in important documents with official status (e.g. documents relating to voting, final acts of conferences), the French alphabetical order must be followed, in line with the official list maintained by SPM. The order is dictated by the long form of the country name; however, in some contexts or due to constraints of space, e.g. for the results of voting, short names are given and may be in the form in which they appear in the SPM list. In lists of countries in other contexts, the order may be dictated by the text itself (for example, to indicate rank in a list, as in “The three countries with the most interns were France, Switzerland and Canada.”)

The names of all countries are regarded as singular nouns of neuter gender (e.g. “the United States has (*not* have) its (*not* her/their) own satellites”).

## Names of other geographical areas/territories

For political reasons, care must also be taken in ITU publications, documents published by or under the auspices of ITU and documents drawn up by ITU officials to use the correct ITU-approved denomination for the geographical areas/territories listed below:

Falkland Islands (Malvinas)

Kosovo(to be accompanied by a footnote reading:“\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.”)

Hong Kong, Special Administrative Region of China (long form)

Hong Kong, China (short form)

Macao, Special Administrative Region of China (long form)

Macao, China (short form)

State of Palestine (the) (no short form)

Taiwan, Province of China.

## Other geographical names

Geographical names should normally be spelled according to the official usage of the country concerned, where there exists an official local spelling in letters of the Roman alphabet (e.g. Basel, Dar es Salaam, Jakarta, Djibouti, Gdansk, Kyiv, N’Djamena, Pago Pago, Singapore, Strasbourg, Wroclaw).

Where a well-established English conventional form exists, however, it should be used (e.g. Addis Ababa, Beirut, Belgrade, Brussels, Copenhagen, Damascus, Geneva, Latakia, Lisbon, Marrakesh, Milan, Prague, Rome, Sharm el-Sheikh, Teheran, The Hague, Timbuktu, Tokyo, Turin, Vienna, Warsaw, Zurich).

Otherwise, the most recent edition of *Times Atlas of the World* should be used as a reference.

## Names of organizations

The English names of organizations that are Sector Members or registered under Academia should be taken from the ITU Global Directory (<https://www.itu.int/GlobalDirectory/>).

For any other organization or entity, if it has English as one of its official or working languages, the English spelling and hyphenation that it uses for its own name and for the titles of its officials should be followed, even if it conflicts with standard ITU usage (e.g. Commonwealth Telecommunication Organisation, African Telecommunications Union, Secretary General of the Organization of American States).

When citing the names of organizations, organs and institutions of an English-speaking country, the national usage should be followed, even if it conflicts with standard ITU usage. It should be followed also for the titles of officials and styles of address (e.g. (UK) Ministry of Defence, (US) Ministry of Defense).

When citing such names in a foreign language, the name should appear in italics, e.g. *Ministerio de Fomento.* For Sector Members and Academia, consult the ITU Global Directory (<https://www.itu.int/GlobalDirectory/>).

Increasingly, the titles of ministries, organizations and entities are being translated in ITU texts. When translating such titles, the translation should be as faithful as possible. “Ministry of” should be used for the titles of most ministries unless the title reads awkwardly. If the name of an entity is followed by an abbreviation/acronym, the abbreviation/acronym should not be translated, e.g.: « Autorité de régulation des télécommunications et des postes (ARTP) » would be rendered as “Posts and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (ARTP)” (not PTRA).

## Names of ITU conferences

The correct way of referring to ITU conferences is by giving the full name followed, in brackets (*not* between commas), by the place (town only) and the year (four digits), separated by a comma, e.g. Plenipotentiary Conference (Minneapolis, 1998), Plenipotentiary Conference (Dubai, 2018), World Administrative Radiocommunication Conference for Dealing with Frequency Allocations in Certain Parts of the Spectrum (Malaga-Torremolinos, 1992), World Telecommunication Policy Forum (Lisbon, 2009), World Conference on International Telecommunications (Dubai, 2012), World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (Hammamet, 2016), World Telecommunication Development Conference (Buenos Aires, 2017), Radiocommunication Assembly (Sharm el-Sheikh, 2019), World Radiocommunication Conference (Sharm el-Sheikh, 2019).

Most ITU conferences have an official abbreviation, which may be used for convenience in working documents, where necessary, with the year (last two digits) attached after a hyphen, e.g. PP‑98, PP‑18, WTPF-09, WCIT-12, WARC‑92, RA-19, WRC-19, WTSA-16, WTDC-17. For the specific year 2000, all four digits are attached, e.g. WRC-2000, WTSA-2000.

For the ITU Council, either refer to “the 2009 session of the Council”, or, as an abbreviation in working documents only, “Council‑09” or “C-09”. The virtual sessions should be referred to as “first virtual consultation of councillors” or “(VCC-1)” and “second virtual consultation of councillors” or “(VCC-2)”. As there was a VCC-1 in both 2020 and 2021, it is recommended to identify the Council session to avoid ambiguity.

Note that we say “the Council” and not simply “Council” (except in abbreviations of the type “Council-09”). However, as these rules are often not followed by authors drafting Council texts in original English, there may be times, in drafting or translating texts that extensively quote or incorporate existing wording, when it is not possible to apply them; in this case, the overriding concern must be to ensure consistency throughout the document in question.

## Instruments of the Union

The instruments of the Union are the Constitution of the International Telecommunication Union, the Convention of the International Telecommunication Union and the Administrative Regulations (i.e. the International Telecommunication Regulations and the Radio Regulations).

The instruments currently in force are the Constitution of the International Telecommunication Union (Geneva, 1992) and the Convention of the International Telecommunication Union (Geneva, 1992), as amended by the Plenipotentiary Conference (Kyoto, 1994), the Plenipotentiary Conference (Minneapolis, 1998), the Plenipotentiary Conference (Marrakesh, 2002), the Plenipotentiary Conference (Antalya, 2006), the Plenipotentiary Conference (Guadalajara, 2010), the Plenipotentiary Conference (Busan, 2014) and the Plenipotentiary Conference (Dubai, 2018). The latter seven plenipotentiary conferences adopted only amending instruments to the 1992 text. It is thus legally (and politically) incorrect to refer to the Constitution or Convention (Dubai, 2018), which simply does not exist.

In view of the length and unwieldiness of the full legal reference, it has been decided, in consultation with the ITU Legal Affairs Unit (JUR *not* LAU), that in all but the most official texts of extreme legal import the shorthand terms “ITU Constitution” and “ITU Convention” may be used, without reference to the place and year, or any subsequent amending instruments, to mean the instruments in force at any given time.

The official way of referring to provisions of the instruments is “No. 123 of the Constitution” or “Nos. 123 and 124 of the Convention”. (See also the “Explanatory notes” at the beginning of the collection of basic texts.) In working documents only, the shorthand formulations CS123 and CV123 are acceptable.

## Forms of address and titles

In order to sidestep the many pitfalls involved in the use of forms of address and titles, which vary according to cultural habits and personal preferences, the standard forms “Mr” and “Ms” should be used as far as possible in working documents such as reports, summary records, translations of incoming correspondence, etc.

Academic titles (e.g. Dr, Lic. [Spanish], Ing. [French/Spanish], Prof.) are thus normally omitted.

Titles such as “H.E.” (for a minister/ambassador), “H.R.H.” (royalty), “Rev.” (clergy), “Lord” or “Sir” and suchlike should, however, be retained.

# CAPITALIZATION

## General rule

Too many capital letters in a sentence or column of type tend to distract the reader’s attention. For this reason, and contrary to many authors’ tendency, as few initial capitals as possible should be used in ITU documents and publications. Hard‑and‑fast rules are difficult to lay down, but some guidelines can be given.

The simple guiding rule is to use:

**• initial capitals for the specific;**

**• lower case for the generic;**

**• lower case wherever there is any doubt.**

The sections below illustrate this rule (and exceptions to it) and give examples of ITU usage.

## Official titles

Only in specific references, in the singular, should initial capital letters be used for the official titles of persons, councils, committees, secretariat units, organizations, institutions, political entities and the like, and for the official titles of treaties and international conventions.

For conferences, initial capitals are used when citing the formal official title of a past, present or future conference, for example “The Plenipotentiary Conference (Antalya, 2006) adopted …”, or when referring to the conference as a legal entity, for example “The Plenipotentiary Conference alone is empowered to …”. Lower case is used when referring to an unnamed session of the conference, for example “… to be submitted to the next plenipotentiary conference”, or one that is in the distant future, such as “… to be submitted to the 2026 plenipotentiary conference”. Once a forthcoming conference has been scheduled, references to it by name may be capitalized in the following format: “the Plenipotentiary Conference (Bucharest, 2022)”. In some less formal contexts (but never the body of resolutions/decisions of e.g. the Plenipotentiary Conference), the form “the 2022 Plenipotentiary Conference” may appear.

*Examples:*

| GENERAL (lower case) | SPECIFIC (initial caps) |
| --- | --- |
| Some plenipotentiary conferences adopt more resolutions and recommendations than others. | Pursuant to its Resolution 77 (Minneapolis, 1998) and Decision 3 (Minneapolis, 1998), the Plenipotentiary Conference established … |
| World radiocommunication conferences consider inputs from the ITU-R study groups and their working parties, on the basis of a work programme established by the previous radiocommunication assembly. | ITU-R Study Group 1 and Task Force 1/9 were particularly active in preparing the World Radiocommunication Conference (Geneva, 1997) and the associated radiocommunication assembly. |
| A drafting group and seven working groups were set up by the different committees. | - |
| Replies from administrations will be processed by a special task force. Five governments have responded to date. | The Administration of France wishes to participate, on behalf of the French Government, in the second meeting of the Task Force on gender issues. |
| The above administrations endorsed the proposal. | The Administrations of France and Germany agreed to hold bilateral consultations. |
| Several ministers asked for the action plan and work programme by the Wednesday following the symposium, but the rapporteurs said that time was too short to compile data for a handbook. | The Minister of Communications of Gabon, referring to Programme 9 of the Buenos Aires Action Plan, said that the Handbook on Rural Telecommunications would be presented at the 1998 symposium on new technologies. |
| The chairs of committees can co‑opt experts as rapporteurs of ad hoc groups. | The Chair of Committee 6 called upon the Vice-Chair to convene Ad hoc Group 6/1. |

*But exceptionally*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The Plenary Meeting may set up committees to consider matters referred to the conference. | The chair of the conference shall be elected at the first plenary meeting. |

## References to documents, texts, publications, and divisions and subdivisions thereof

Only in specific references, in the singular, should initial capital letters be used forreferences to documents, texts, publications, and divisions and subdivisions thereof.

The words “paragraph”, “section” and “item” are not capitalized (and can often be avoided by using the § sign (§§ for plural, space between the sign and the number, e.g. § 2.1, §§ 2.1-3.1). Similarly, the word “page” is not capitalized (and references to page numbers should be used with caution when dealing with texts printed in different language versions without parallel pagination).

The word “agenda” is not capitalized, e.g. “In accordance with the agenda of the conference”, “WRC-11 agenda item 1.18”.

A major exception to the general rule, by local convention in the ITU Sectors, is “Recommendation”, when referring specifically to a standard adopted by one of the Sectors (i.e. ITU-T, ITU-R and ITU-D Recommendations) and “Question”, when referring to a formal text adopted for study by a study group of a Sector (i.e. ITU-T, ITU-R and ITU-D Questions).

*Examples:*

| GENERAL (lower case) | SPECIFIC (initial caps) |
| --- | --- |
| Credentials are not required for conferences that do not produce final acts. | The Final Acts of WRC-97 were signed on 21 November 1997. |
| The document on staff matters, comprising 24 parts, each with 15 sections, plus 12 annexes, was adopted. | The results of the survey are given in Annex B to Document PP-98/25, specifically § 35 of section 2 (page 6 of the English version). |
| Antenna patterns are described in the tables and figures in the annex to the antenna reference manual. | For earth-station antennas, see Figure 1 in Chapter 3; for space-station antennas, see Table 6 in Annex B to Chapter 9. |
| Frequency assignments are published in special sections of the BR International Frequency Information Circular. | Proposal to modify Special Section AR11/A/119. |
| Comprehensive reports are issued after each study group meeting. | As stated in section II of Report R.6 of ITU-T Study Group 5, … |
| The rules of procedure governing submissionsare set out hereunder. | Considering that the Rule of Procedure on No. 9.6 states that… |
| The draft rules of procedure have yet to be discussed. | The Radio Regulations Board approves the Rules of Procedure, which are to be applied by the Radiocommunication Bureau. |
| *but* |  |
| ITU-T Recommendations, drafted by the study groups in response to Questions adopted at the assembly, are published in fascicles and volumes. Some of the study groups also produce handbooks and reports. | Relevant texts, including Recommendation ITU-T F.64, are contained in Fascicle II.5 of Volume 6; the Handbook on Rural Telecommunications is under preparation in response to Question 7/1. |

## If in doubt, use lower case

In some cases, it can be difficult to gauge whether a reference is general or specific, especially when a general reference is made to a specific identifiable body or text, often one having already been referred to in the previous sentence or earlier in the document. In such instances, unless there is a risk of ambiguity, the rule “if in doubt, use lower case” applies.

Examples:

• Tariff issues are addressed in ITU-T Study Group 3. At its November meeting, that study group decided ...

• The conference adopted Resolution 51 on staff matters. The resolution called for a number of measures ...

• The Chair of Committee 6 said that her committee had completed its work on time.

## Capitalized titles

Historically, when a title (e.g. of a specific conference or entity) is to be capitalized under the above rules, all the words it comprises used to take initial capitals, except for articles, conjunctions and prepositions (e.g. World Administrative Radio Conference for Dealing with Frequency Allocations in Certain Parts of the Spectrum).

In view of the increasing number of groups at all levels, however, and to avoid absurd instances where words such as “Which” and “It” have had to be capitalized, the recent trend in ITU is to move towards limiting capitals to the core part of the entity name, e.g. “Council Working Group on security definitions and terminology”; “Dedicated Group on international Internet policy issues”; “ITU-T Focus Group on smart grid”, etc.

## Compass points

The words north, south, east and west, and the compounds derived from them, should not be capitalized unless they are being used to refer to a major region of the globe or in a political context (e.g. East Africa, the West, the global South) or as geographical coordinates (e.g. “north of latitude 30° North”).

## Always capitalized

The following are always capitalized in ITU, either by tradition or in order to avoid ambiguity:

the International Telecommunication Union; the Union

the Council (Council-98, Council session)

Government (when referring to one or more national governments)

Member State (referring to an ITU Member State; but “the member States of the European Union agreed…”)

Sector Member

Associate (within the meaning of No. 241A of the Convention)

Academia (when referring to an academic entity or academic entities that are registered with ITU in the “Academia” membership category)

the Radiocommunication Sector, the Telecommunication Standardization Sector, the Telecommunication Development Sector

the Sector(s), a Sector (when referring to one of the three ITU Sectors)  
(*but* the “telecommunication sector”, when referring to the general field of activity)

the Radio Regulations Board, the Board

the Radiocommunication Bureau, the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau, the Telecommunication Development Bureau, the General Secretariat

the Bureau(x)

the General Secretariat (of ITU)  
(*but* the secretariat of a conference or meeting; the ITU Telecom secretariat)

the Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General

the Constitution, the Convention, the Administrative Regulations

the Radio Regulations, the International Telecommunication Regulations

the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules, the Financial Regulations

State (in the sense of an organized national entity)

General Service staff; Professional staff

the Summit (when referring to the World Summit on the Information Society – WSIS)

the Internet (*but* the intranet)

a Recommendation (when referring to the recognized international standard constituted by an ITU‑R/ITU-T/ITU-D Recommendation); a Question (when referring to an ITU-R/ ITU‑T/ITU-D Question for study)

*Exception*: For internal consistency of the texts in question, this rule for “Recommendation” and “Question” in respect of the ITU Sectors is *not* applied in the output texts (Constitution, Convention, resolutions, etc.) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, where the standard capitalization rule (lower case for general reference/initial capitals only for a specific reference with a number) is followed.

# Not capitalized (except when grammar requires)

session financial plan

delegate, delegation operational plan

observer information society

ITU budget study period

strategic plan for the Union for 2011-2015 financial operating report

Note also that the existence of an abbreviation coined for convenience certainly does not imply that the full term needs to be capitalized. Thus, concepts such as least developed country (LDC), information and communication technologies (ICTs), global information infrastructure (GII), next-generation network (NGN), etc. do not take initial capitals.

## Special cases

Member, member

The word “member” is capitalized only in the terms “Member State” and “Sector Member”; it is written in lower case when referring to an individual:

member of RRB

member of a group, committee, etc.

Note that, since the change in terminology adopted by the Plenipotentiary Conference (Minneapolis, 1998), the Council has Member States (*not* Members). Hence:

Member State of the Council

Observer Member State.

Individuals attending the Council on behalf of Member States are not referred to as members. Use:

councillor

observer.

The loose term “member of the Union” is ambiguous and should be avoided as far as possible. It should be made clear in each case whether the text refers to Member States, Sector Members, Associates (*not* Associate Member), or some combination thereof. The word “membership” can be useful in general texts, although it poses problems for translation into other languages. Where authors persist in using the loose term “member”, it is advisable to make it as generic as possible by using a lower-case initial letter, i.e. “members of the Union”.

Region/region

The word **“**region**”** is only capitalized when specifically referring to the three Regions defined in the Radio Regulations for frequency-allocation purposes: Region 1, Region 2, Region 3 (cf. No. 5.2 of the Radio Regulations).

It is not capitalized when referring to more informal concepts of regions, such as the administrative regions used for matters involving geographical representation in the Union’s structure (region A, region B, region C, etc.) or the regions served by the ITU regional offices (i.e. Africa region, Americas region, Arab States region, Commonwealth of Independent States region, Asia and the Pacific region, Europe region).

# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

# General principles

Acronyms and other types of abbreviations are used to save space and to avoid distracting the reader with the repeated spelling out of long words and phrases. Anything that would be unpleasing to the eye or puzzling if abbreviated should, however, be spelled out.

Two-letter abbreviations are often highly ambiguous: MS can stand for Member State, mobile service, mobile station, maritime station, multiple sclerosis, etc.; SG can stand for Secretary-General, study group, etc. They should therefore be avoided in general (but see the discussion of exceptions below).

Some abbreviations are introduced purely for convenience in a narrow context. These should not appear in the title and must be identified on first appearance in the text (and separately in the abstract/cover page if used there). This is best done by giving the words in full followed by the abbreviation in brackets.

With abbreviations and acronyms of a more durable nature, in working documents a decision has to be made on the basis of experience and common sense whether they fall into class a) or class b) below:

a) Abbreviations which the average reader of the text cannot be expected to know. These should be treated as described above.

b) Abbreviations which the average reader of the text may be expected to know. These may be treated as described above or used without explanation, as long as there is no risk of ambiguity.

By way of example, any of the following might fall into class b) in many technical documents, but should be treated as class a) in a text intended for a broader readership:

acronyms and abbreviations for international organizations and entities (e.g. IAEA, IEC), including those of ITU (e.g. BR, BDT, TSB; RA, WRC);

well-known technical or industry jargon (AI, IP, VoIP, e.i.r.p., epfd);

widespread, universally recognized shorthand used in working documents of the Sectors, e.g. SG for study group, WP for working party, Q for Question, etc.[[4]](#footnote-4)4

If a number of unfamiliar abbreviations are to be used extensively in a long document or in a publication, it is a very good idea to provide a separate list of abbreviations at the beginning or end of the text.

Where space is an important consideration, as in tables and figures, abbreviations should be used extensively, with explanations provided, if necessary, in a table footnote or at the end of a figure caption.

In important, official documents such as treaty texts (including resolutions, recommendations, decisions and opinions or publications), all abbreviations and acronyms (with the exception of “ITU”) should be identified on first appearance in the body of the text, by spelling them out in full followed by the abbreviation in brackets. Another option (adopted, for instance, in the Radio Regulations) is to define frequently used abbreviations at the beginning of the text or publication.

Abbreviations should be used sparingly in titles, and should not appear in the titles of official texts such as resolutions.

## Plurals of abbreviations

The plural of a fully capitalized abbreviation (where such usage cannot be avoided) is formed by adding a lower case “s”, e.g. ICTs, LDCs (but *not* LDC’s or LDCS), MCTs, NGNs.

Note the exception “small island developing States” (SIDS), where (following United Nations usage) the last “S” relates to “States” and there is no “s” to mark the plural.

## Use of articles with abbreviations

*Definite article*

The policy followed in ITU is to omit the definite article before abbreviations and acronyms identifying organizations, entities or groups (e.g. ITU, *not* the ITU; UNDP, *not* the UNDP; BR, TSB and BDT, *not* the BR, the TSB and the BDT; Director of BR, Director of TSB, Director of BDT; EG-ITRs, CWG-Internet, CWG-LANG, EGTI).

*Indefinite article*

The choice between the indefinite articles “a” and “an” before an abbreviation depends on pronunciation, not spelling. Use “a” if the abbreviation begins with a consonant sound, including an aspirated “h” and a vowel pronounced with the sound of “w” or “y”. Use “an” if the abbreviation begins with a vowel sound, including an unaspirated “h”. For example: a VoIP device, a UNESCO document, a host country; an LDC, an SMS, an historic occasion.

## Punctuation in abbreviations

A full stop (period) is normally used at the end of an abbreviated word when the word is truncated in such a manner that the final letter of the abbreviation is not the same as the final letter of the complete word (e.g. Corp. for “Corporation”). In most cases, there should be no full stop at the end of an abbreviation when the middle part of the word is omitted so that the final letter of the abbreviation is the same as the final letter of the complete word (e.g. Ltd for “Limited”). Thus, there is no full stop after Mr, or after the *plurals* of the following:

Ref. [1] but Refs [1, 2]  
Fig. 1 but Figs 3 and 4  
Vol. 1 but Vols 7-9  
Eq. (5) but Eqs (5, 6)

Note the following forms, however:

No. 123, Nos. 123 and 124  
p. 1, pp. 1-9  
para. 1, paras. 2-4

The abbreviations “e.g.” and “i.e.” are not followed by a comma, and the abbreviation vs (for versus) is not followed by a full stop.

## Abbreviation of dates and times

The accepted abbreviation of the names of the months is the first three letters followed by a full stop, except for May, June and July, which are never abbreviated.

The abbreviations for the days of the week are:

Mon. Tues. Wed. Thurs. Fri. Sat. Sun.

However, in a figure or table where all the days of the week appear in sequence, they may be written: M T W T F S S.

## Currency units

ITU uses the three-letter currency codes established by ISO under Standard ISO 4217 – see the list at <https://www.iso.org/iso/currency_codes>. When spelled out, the name of the currency unit is not capitalized (Swiss francs, United States dollars).

The code is placed before the amount, e.g.

CHF 2 million USD 10 500 GBP 50

EUR 1 000 JPY 10 million XAF 20 000

## ITU structure and abbreviations designating structural units

The ITU organization charts are posted on the intranet at: [Pages - Organization Charts (itu.int)](https://intranet.itu.int/gs/hrmd/Pages/organization-charts.aspx)

Note that the unit responsible for telecommunication exhibitions and forums is always referred to as ITU Telecom (not simply “Telecom” or “TELECOM”).

## Domain names

The standard way to refer to domain name suffixes in running text is to place them in inverted commas, e.g. “.es”, “.ch”, “.int”, “.org” (*not* <.es> or just .ch).

## Use of the ampersand (“&”)

Generally, do not use the ampersand (“&”) in regular text, headings or titles as a replacement for the perfectly good word “and”.

Exceptions:

• In established company names (e.g. Dolce & Gabbana, Marks & Spencer, Tiffany & Co.), company abbreviations (e.g. AT&T, A&P supermarkets), abbreviations for ITU entities or groups (C&P, CWG-WSIS&SDG) or shorthand expressions (e.g. R&D, B&B, R&B)

• When logos, titles or names contain the mark as a design feature

• In tables or suchlike when space is limited

• When using certain citation systems (notably the APA system; conversely, the ampersand is not used in the MLA or Chicago systems often employed in ITU)

• To denote the specific case of two writers collaborating on a specific creative work (system followed by the Writers Guild of America).

# LAYOUT

## Templates

In today’s fully electronic environment, templates for the major types of document have been developed, and these should of course be followed in all cases.

In addition, models may be distributed for certain types of document (e.g. conference/meeting documents, etc.).

Accordingly, for the sake of harmonization, efficiency and corporate image, officials in charge of meetings should refrain from producing “home-grown” templates as far as possible.

## Numbering of paragraphs

For documents liable to be discussed in conferences and meetings or referred to in other texts, it is extremely useful for each paragraph to bear a separate identification. As far as possible, paragraph numbers should be limited to a single whole number (1, 2, 3, …10, …, n) or to one decimal place (1.1, 1.2, 1.3; 2.1, 2.2, … 2.44, … 2.n, 3.1, …). Longer numbers of the form 3.21.2.41 are cumbersome and can easily cause confusion in a meeting.

## Titles and headings

There have never been any standard rules in ITU for the treatment of titles, headings and suchlike. Usage varies according to the document or text concerned, and among the different departments and the Sectors. The template or model should be followed where one exists; otherwise, the following simple guidelines may be useful.

Titles and headings are to be printed in bold type. Underlining is no longer used. The preferred format is an initial capital on the first word only (except of course when a subsequent word is capitalized in its own right), e.g.:

**1 Preliminary draft plan of action for the least developed countries**

**2 Implementation of a programme to increase the participation of Sector Members in the work of the organization**

In the case of composite headings, each part should be introduced by an initial capital, e.g.:

**3 The changing telecommunication environment: Ways and means of enhancing the Union’s relevance and responsiveness**

## Lists

Here again, there have never been any standard rules in ITU for the treatment of material presented in the form of lists. Details of specific practices for particular types of texts or publications should be obtained from the Sector editorial service.

The following, therefore, are merely suggested general guidelines that may be useful.

Lists in running text

In very simple lists with a few short items, it can often be better to run the text on than to give each item a fresh line, and often even to omit any kind of numbering or lettering. If numbers or letters are used for clarity or emphasis, separate the items by semicolons or commas and, if necessary for clarity, introduce the list with a colon.

Examples:

Its repercussions are political, economic, cultural and social.[[5]](#footnote-5)5

It was proposed that the sentence be redrafted; that the verb be strengthened; that the punctuation be altered; and that all similar provisions be aligned.

The committee was mainly concerned with a) the economic origins of the crisis, and b) its social repercussions.

The committee was mainly concerned with the following: a) the economic origins of the crisis; b) its social repercussions; and c) the effect on the environment.

Formatted lists

For the sake of clarity or emphasis, more complicated or longer lists can often be set out as indents or bullet points, introduced by a colon.

Examples of three commonly used formats are provided below.

**These are provided for guidance only, and do not preclude drafters from preferring other formats. The primary consideration is to ensure consistency within any given document or series of documents.**

***Format A***

If each item comprises less than a complete sentence, the list is actually part of a single long sentence. In this case, the formatting can effectively replace/minimize the punctuation: use a colon to start the list, begin each bulleted item with a lower-case letter, and place a full stop at the end of the last item.

Example:

The purpose of training is to:

• improve staff qualifications

• meet the organization’s human resources needs

• promote mobility

• keep abreast of new technologies

• motivate staff.

***Format B***

Alternatively, especially if some of the bulleted items are longer than one line, it is possible to end each bulleted item with a semicolon, and place a full stop at the end of the last item.

Example:

The purposes of the conference were to:

• adopt new and revised Questions to be studied by ITU-D study groups during the next study period;

• adopt regional initiatives for the six regions;

• agree on the WTDC-10 input to the strategic plan for ITU-D for 2012-2015, which will feed into the next plenipotentiary conference to be held in Guadalajara in October 2010.

It is also acceptable, to ensure consistency with the formatting of the original text, to start such longer bullet points with capital letters, i.e.:

The purposes of the conference were to:

• Adopt new and revised Questions to be studied by ITU-D study groups during the next study period;

• Adopt regional initiatives for the six regions;

• Agree on the WTDC-10 input to the strategic plan for ITU-D for 2012-2015, which will feed into the next plenipotentiary conference to be held in Guadalajara in October 2010.

***Format C***

If the items in the list comprise one or more complete sentences, each sentence should begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop.

Example:

Fuerstein has written a seminal work on participatory evaluation, and suggests that a participatory evaluation in the development context should include certain steps:

• All those involved in a programme decide jointly to use a participatory approach. They decide exactly what the objectives of the evaluation are. This can turn out to be harder than originally thought.

• When agreement is reached, a small group of coordinators is elected to plan and organize the details.

• The best methods for attaining the objectives are then chosen.

## Neutral order in lists

In official ITU documents, such as the basic instruments, final acts and outputs of conferences and other political or high-level texts, it is sometimes necessary to follow a neutral order to avoid any suggestion of magnitude, judgement, preference, merit, etc.

Countries: Countries should be listed in the French alphabetical order (by long name), according to the official ITU list of Member States (see *Names of countries* above).

Official languages: The official languages should similarly be listed in the French alphabetical order, i.e. English, Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, French, Russian.

ITU Sectors: ITU Sectors (and their respective Bureaux) should follow the order in the ITU Constitution, i.e. ITU-R, ITU-T, ITU-D; and BR, TSB, BDT.

## Footnotes/bibliographies

For historical reasons, footnote references in the final acts, final reports, resolutions and decisions of PP, WCIT, WRC, WTSA and WTDC and the Radio Regulations, and consequently input documents and contributions to those conferences and assemblies, follow the French format, i.e. placing the footnote indicator before the punctuation: “the interests and needs of the developing countries1, …”; “… frequency arrangements of individual administrations2; …”.

For other documents and publications, follow the English format, i.e. “the interests and needs of the developing countries,1 …”; “… frequency arrangements of individual administrations;2 …”.

In ITU, there is no single established system in use across all the Sectors and categories of documents in respect of layout of footnotes, bibliographical references, and suchlike. The paramount consideration for the author or editor is to ensure internal consistency within a document or publication. To help authors and editors, links to the recognized systems most widely used in publications worldwide are given below:

[United Nations Editorial Manual](https://www.un.org/dgacm/en/content/editorial-manual), see [Footnotes and other references](https://www.un.org/dgacm/en/content/editorial-manual/footnotes/index)

[Chicago Manual of Style](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html)

[Harvard University Press Guidelines](https://www.hup.harvard.edu/resources/authors/pdf/hup-author-guidelines-author-date-citations-and-reference-lists.pdf)

[APA style](https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples)

[IEEE Editorial Style Manual for Authors](https://ieeeauthorcenter.ieee.org/wp-content/uploads/IEEE_Style_Manual.pdf).

## Use of “etc.” in lists

At the end of a list, “etc.” is always preceded by a comma.

Do not end a list with “… , etc.” if it begins with “e.g.”, “including”, “for example” or “such as”, since these already indicate that the list is non-exhaustive. Choose one or the other, not both.

Formulations such as “and so on”, “and so forth” can be used as a more elegant alternative to “etc.”.

# RESOLUTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, DECISIONS AND OPINIONS

## Resolutions, recommendations, decisions and opinions of conferences, assemblies and so forth

Resolutions, recommendations, decisions and opinions of conferences, assemblies, etc., follow a particular format.

The basic idea to bear in mind is that such texts in fact constitute one long sentence, with the name of the conference as the subject, and therefore should in principle contain no full stops. The different parts are separated by semicolons (within a section) or commas (between sections).

The number of a resolution, recommendation, decision or opinion is not preceded by “No.” (e.g. Resolution 15, Resolution COM7/14, Recommendation 622 (WRC-97), Decision 7/1, Opinion A).

By decision of editorial committees of past treaty-making conferences in consultation with the Legal Affairs Unit, a resolution must always include an operative paragraph introduced by *resolves*.

Note that resolutions, recommendations, decisions and opinions are each considered as separate, standalone instruments.

## Numbering of resolutions and decisions of conferences/assemblies

The Plenipotentiary Conference (Minneapolis, 1998) adopted a new numbering system for resolutions and decisions of the Plenipotentiary Conference. Previously, all resolutions and decisions were reviewed at each plenipotentiary conference, leading to wholesale renumbering. This is no longer the case, and resolutions and decisions now remain in force unless abrogated or revised by a subsequent plenipotentiary conference.

As a result, the place name and date in brackets has become an integral part of the number of each resolution or decision, and must never be omitted, in order to avoid potential ambiguity.

Examples:

Resolution 5 (Kyoto, 1994)  
Resolution 80 (Rev. Marrakesh, 2002)  
Resolution 58 (Rev. Busan, 2014)  
Resolution 213 (Dubai, 2018).

This scheme has been adopted, by analogy, for resolutions of the World Conference on International Telecommunications, the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly and the World Telecommunication Development Conference: e.g. Resolution 2 (Dubai, 2012) of WCIT; Resolution 55 (Rev. Dubai, 2012) of WTSA; Resolution 17 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of WTDC.

For historical reasons, resolutions of the World Radiocommunication Conference, which are contained in Volume 3 of the Radio Regulations, adopt a different numbering system, following the format: Resolution 122 (WRC-07), Resolution 10 (Rev.WRC-2000), Resolution 908 (Rev.WRC‑15), etc. Resolutions of the Radiocommunication Assembly use yet another system, following the format: Resolution ITU-R 1-5 (where ITU-R 1 is the number and 5 is the version number reflecting the number of revisions), Resolution ITU-R 33-2, Resolution ITU-R 8-1, etc. Here again, although this is not reflected in the format of the resolutions as presented in the output Proceedings of the assembly, for the sake of harmonization the place and date are specified, resulting in formulations of the type: Resolution ITU-R 7-3 (Geneva, 2015).

References to Council resolutions and decisions are currently very inconsistent across ITU documentation, and various formats are found. The best approach is to check the text of the resolution or decision in question. For example, in PP resolutions and decisions, references to Council resolutions may be referred to as follows: “Council Resolution 1372 (2015, last amended 2019), on the Council Working Group on Languages (CWG-LANG)”.

When a reference to a resolution also includes the title or subject of that resolution, in order to avoid editorial problems associated with direct citations (e.g. slight changes, the need to use editorial markers such as “[ ]” or “…”, capitalization issues, flexibility to use abbreviations), avoid the use of quotation marks, italics, etc. Instead, for consistency and simplicity use the following standardized format: a comma, followed by the word “on” and the title or subject without a capital letter on the first word.

For example:

Resolution 180 (Rev. Busan, 2014), on facilitating the transition from IPv4 to IPv6, invites Member States …

Resolution 20 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference, on non-discriminatory access to modern telecommunication/ICT facilities, resolved that … .

## Specific editorial rules for resolutions

Detailed guidance on the specific editorial rules for resolutions of ITU conferences is available on request from the English Language Section ([christine.ferrie-tenconi@itu.int](mailto:christine.ferrie-tenconi@itu.int)) or the secretary of the editorial committee concerned.

## ITU-R and ITU-T Recommendations

Detailed guidance on the specific editorial rules for ITU-R and ITU-T Recommendations is developed by the respective Sectors and is available on request from the BR and TSB editorial units.

# NON-DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE

In drafting documents, it must be borne in mind that, as an international organization, ITU has to take care in its texts to avoid all forms of discrimination as to gender, race, culture, nationality, religion, and suchlike.

Sometimes, offence may be caused inadvertently, where the reader and the author have different sensitivities. The most frequent example of this, and one which is being addressed throughout the United Nations system of organizations, is gender bias.

## Gender-neutral language

If care is not taken, the written word can reinforce many common but deprecated perceptions of the respective roles of men and women in society. This may result from failure to mention women specifically, by using exclusively masculine pronouns (e.g. “he” or “his”) when both women and men are involved (e.g. “A telecommunication engineer is a specialist in *his* domain ...”); from use of words formed from the root “man” (e.g. “manpower”, to “man” a project); or simply from careless drafting (e.g. “Research scientists often neglect their wives and children ...”).

When drafting ITU material, the general rule should be to make every effort to avoid gender bias, without being over-dogmatic. Guidance is given below.

As indicated in the footnote to the ITU Constitution and Convention, the language used in the basic instruments of the Union is to be considered as gender neutral. By extension, the same approach should apply in the texts of all of the Union’s bodies.

This means, in practice, that all terms referring to functions, such as Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General, Director, chair, vice-chair, delegate, observer, are gender neutral, since the functions in question can equally be performed by women or men.

Naturally, however, when such terms designate an identifiable person actually fulfilling the functions at a given time, then the corresponding feminine or masculine pronouns will be used (e.g. “The Secretary-General [Ms Bogdan-Martin] and *her* staff…”; “The Chair of the Council [Mr Martinez ] said that *he* would …”; “The delegate of Denmark said that *her* delegation was …”).

It is often appropriate to use neutral terms such as “spouse” rather than “wife” or “husband” where gender is not necessary to the sense.

Masculine pronouns can often be avoided by simply deleting them (“The trainee is usually the best judge of the value of *his* training”-> “The trainee is often the best judge of the value of *the* training”); by using the plural (“Trainees are often the best judge of the value of *their* training”); by rephrasing (“The best judge of the value of the training is often the trainee”); or by using the first person plural (“*Man* is the victim of his own inventions. He is ruining the environment” -> “*We* are the victim of our own inventions. We are ruining the environment”).

The alternative form (“his or her”) is cumbersome and should be used sparingly, although it may be acceptable on occasion (“For the experiment, each child was asked to draw an object on his or her card ...”). In lengthy legal texts, such as the Staff Regulations, when no other solution is possible, a clear footnote may be inserted at the beginning of the document stating that the language is considered to be gender neutral and that, where absolutely necessary, “he” and “his” are used for convenience but shall be taken to refer to both women and men.

The confusion which often occurs in people’s minds because the word “man” in English means not only “a human being” but also “an adult male” (see above-mentioned Oxford Dictionaries), and which is frequently compounded by a stereotyped view of women’s and men’s roles in society, can in many cases be avoided by using suitable alternative words or forms. More often than not, the words “man” and “mankind” can easily be replaced by “people”, “humanity”, “humans”, “humankind” or “human”. The verb “to staff” should be preferred to “to man”: hence the established term in ITU is now “staffing table”. “Person-days”, “consultant-months” and “expert-days” are good alternatives to “man-days” or “man-months”. Acceptable alternatives exist for many job titles, such as “supervisor”, “worker” and “police officer” instead of “foreman”, “workman” and “policeman”, and for words like “manpower”, to which “workforce” or “human resources” should be preferred.

There may, however, continue to be occasions when use of a term including the root “man” is unavoidable, even where the context is not limited to men, either because there is no generally acceptable alternative, as in the case of “man-made noise” (as defined in ITU-T), or because the term including “man” is considered to be a lesser evil than the alternatives on offer, which may in fact be counterproductive because they are not widely enough accepted, or are ugly or contrived.

For example, from 2000-2023 in accordance with Decision 500 (C-2000), the term “chairman” was used in English in ITU documents to refer to both the function and role (when there was no named holder) and to the individual holder of the role at a specific meeting or conference.

The 2023 session of the Council abrogated Decision 500 and agreed that in future the neutral term “chair” should be used in English to designate the function and role, with no retroactive effect.

By definition, in gender-neutral language, the order in a straightforward list does not suggest any precedence, and should be decided by independent factors such as phonetics and usage. For example, in ITU texts you might encounter “women and men” and “ladies and gentlemen”, but “male and female” and “Sir/Madam”.

## Disability-inclusive and non-stigmatizing language

When referring to persons with disabilities, people-first language should be used. Placing a reference to the person or group before the reference to the disability emphasizes the person and does not define them by their disability or specific need; examples of this include “persons with disabilities”, “persons with specific needs” and “children with intellectual disabilities”. Avoid acronyms designating those persons or groups, such as PwD.

Exceptions to this include “deaf” and “blind”, which may be used before the person or group being described, i.e. “deaf persons” or “persons who are deaf”. Avoid, however, language that defines groups of people solely by a disability and removes their personhood, i.e. use “blind persons” or “persons who are blind” instead of “the blind”.

Language should be neutral and avoid the implication of suffering or illness, e.g. “has dyslexia” rather than “suffers from dyslexia” and “wheelchair user” rather than “wheelchair-bound”. Similarly, care should be taken to avoid using terms that may imply stigma, particularly in the case of specific diseases such as Hansen’s disease (formerly known as leprosy) and AIDS (e.g. use “living with HIV” rather than “HIV-infected”).

For further guidance, consult the United Nations Disability-Inclusive Language Guidelines (<https://www.ungeneva.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/Disability-Inclusive-Language-Guidelines.pdf>) and the WHO Style Guide (especially Chapter 8, “Non-discriminatory language”).

# CORRESPONDENCE

In English, certain specific forms of salutation (e.g. “Dear Sir”) call for corresponding specific closing formulas (e.g. “Yours faithfully”). The main combinations are set out in the table below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Salutation | Closing |
| Dear Sir, | Yours faithfully, |
| Dear Madam, | Yours faithfully, |
| Dear Mr/Ms [name], | Yours sincerely, |
| Sir, | Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration, |
| Madam, | Accept, Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration, |

Note that “Yours sincerely” and “Yours faithfully” can be made more formal by ending the letter with the words “I remain”.

Example: Looking forward to meeting you, I remain,

Yours faithfully,

[*signed*]

Name of person concerned

Increasingly, correspondence is being signed electronically or using a digital signature, in which case the following formulas may be used:

Yours faithfully,

or Yours sincerely,

[*signed electronically*] or [*digital signature*]

Name of person concerned

When the gender of the recipient is not known, or in circular or multi-address letters, the gender-neutral salutation “Dear Sir/Madam” is used.

The precise formulas to be used when drafting and typing official ITU correspondence are recapitulated in the table below for convenience.

## FORMULAS TO BE USED WHEN DRAFTING AND TYPING OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Type of letter | **Address** | **Salutation** | **Closing** |
| Minister (formal) | His [Her] Excellency Mr [Ms] ………… Minister of ………. | Sir [Madam], | Accept, Sir [Madam], the assurances of my highest consideration, |
| Minister (informal) | His [Her] Excellency Mr [Ms] ………… Minister of ………. | Dear Minister, | I remain, dear Minister,  Yours sincerely, *or simply* Yours sincerely, |
| Ambassador (formal) | His [Her] Excellency Mr [Ms] …………… Ambassador ………………. | Sir [Madam], | Accept, Sir [Madam], the assurances of my highest consideration, |
| Ambassador (informal) | His [Her] Excellency Mr [Ms] …………. Ambassador …………………. | Dear Mr [Ms] Ambassador, *or* Dear Ambassador, | I remain, dear Mr [Ms] Ambassador,  Yours sincerely, *or simply* Yours sincerely, |
| Secretary-General of the United Nations | The Honourable A. Guterres  Secretary-General United Nations | Dear Mr Secretary-General, | Yours faithfully, |
| Head of specialized agency (formal) | Mr [Ms] ………………. Director-General [Secretary-General] | Dear Mr [Ms] Director-General [Secretary-General], or Dear Sir [Madam], | Yours faithfully, |
| Head of specialized agency (informal) | Mr [Ms] ……………… Director-General [Secretary-General] | Dear Mr [Ms] ………………, | Yours sincerely, |
| Director General of an administration | The Director General ………………… | Dear Sir [Madam], | Yours faithfully, |
| Others (formal) |  | Dear Sir [Madam], | Yours faithfully, |
| Others (informal) |  | Dear Mr [Ms] ………………, | Yours sincerely, |

## Annex A ITU Word list

a posteriori

a priori

about   
(for numbers, e.g. about 30; about one-third) (for dates, use “around”)

above-mentioned

ad hoc (no italics)

ad hoc group (when capitalized: Ad hoc Group)

*ad interim* (*but* a.i.)

addendum (pl. addenda)

administration (*but* the French Administration; the Administrations of France and Spain); this Administration (in a country’s own contribution))

administrative circular (no hyphen)

advertise

advise, adviser (*not* advisor), advisable

aesthetic

aforementioned

age (age 5, 6, etc.; 5 years of age)

aged (aged 5 years or more)

ageing; ageism

agenda (*not* Agenda) (pl. agendas)

aide‑mémoire (pl. aides‑mémoire)

AIDS

air conditioner, air conditioning

air traffic management (ATM)

air-air (adj.) (ICAO)

air‑conditioned

aircraft (sing. and pl.)

air-ground (adj.) (ICAO)

allot, allotted, allotment

analogue

analyse

antennae (insects)

antennas (radio)

apprise

around   
(for dates, e.g. around 1900; around May) (for numbers, use “about”)

Associate (*not* Associate Member) (CV241A)

audiofrequency

audiovisual

awareness-raising (noun and adj.)

back up (verb); backup (noun and adj.)

backward (adj.); backwards (adv.)

balance of payments (noun);  
balance-of-payments (adj.)

balance sheet (noun);   
balance-sheet (adj.)

bandwidth

baseband

baseline

beamwidth

behaviour

benchmark

benefited, benefiting

biannual (twice a year)

bidirectional

biennial (every second year)

biennium (pl. bienniums)

big data

bilateral

bimonthly

*bis* (Latin, used as a suffix for numbering new paragraphs e.g. 1*bis*, 1*ter*, 1*quater*)

bit rate (noun); bit-rate (adj.)

bits per second; bit/s; kbit/s; Mbit/s; Gbit/s, Tbit/s (*rather than* bps or kbps, etc.); *not to be confused with* MB, GB, TB for megabyte, gigabyte, terabyte

blockchain

bona fide (no italics)

bookkeeping

bottleneck

break down (verb); breakdown (noun and adj.)

break through (verb); breakthrough (noun)

break up (verb); break-up (noun and adj.)

broadband

broadcasting satellite (noun); broadcasting-satellite (adj.), e.g. broadcasting-satellite service

budget; ordinary budget (lower case)

budgeted

build up (verb); build‑up (noun)

Bureaux (plural)

bypass

by-product

call-back

cancel, cancelled, cancelling

cannot

capacity building (noun); capacity-building (adj.)

car park

carry over (verb); carry-over (noun)

case law

case study

case-by-case (adj.); case by case (pred.)

catalogue

catalyse

CD-ROM

cellphone; cellular phone

centre of excellence

centre, centred, centring

chair (*not* chairperson, chairwoman, chairman)

chairship (*not* chairmanship)

channelled, channelling

chargé d’affaires (pl. chargés d’affaires)

chat room

checklist

check-up (noun)

*chef de cabinet*

cheque (bank)

circuit-switched; circuit-switching

circular letter (no hyphen)

clearing house

cloud (the)

cloud-based

co-channel

code-division multiple access

coefficient

coexistence

collective letter (no hyphen)

collocate, collocation (of study group meetings, cf. WTSA Res. 2)

colloquium (pl. colloquiums)

colour

combating

common law (noun); common-law (adj.)

common system (UN) (*not* Common System)

communiqué (no italics)

compel, compelled

compendium (pl. compendiums)

competence, pl. competences (=mandate, jurisdiction)

competencies, sing. competency (=human resources management term for skills)

computer incident response team (CIRT) (*not* computer emergency response team (CERT) unless the proprietary name is intended)

concentrator

connection

consensus

consortium (pl. consortia)

converter

cooperate, cooperation

coordinate, coordination

co-primary

corrigendum (pl. corrigenda)

cost accounting (noun); cost-accounting (adj.)

cost allocation (noun); cost-allocation (adj.)

cost centre

cost recovery (noun); cost-recovery (adj.)

cost-benefit

cost-effective; cost-effectiveness;

cost-effectively (always hyphenated)

cost-oriented (in preference to cost-orientated)

councillor (member of the ITU Council)

counsellor, senior counsellor

counter-attack

counter-intuitive

countermeasure

counterproductive

counter-revolution

counterterrorism

coup d’état (pl. coups d’état)

COVID-19

criterion (pl. criteria)

cross-border (adj.)

cross-reference (noun and verb)

cross-section

cross-subsidy; cross-subsidization

curriculum (pl. curricula)

curriculum vitae (no italics)

cut back (verb); cutback (noun)

cut off (verb); cut-off (noun and adj.)

cyber affair; cyber issue; cyberattack; cybercommunity; cybercrime; cybersecurity; cyberterrorism; cyberthreat

cyber-related (adj.)

data centre

data processing (noun);   
data-processing (adj.)

data relay system (DRS)

databank

database

dataset

daytime

*de facto*

de jure (no italics)

deadline

debug, debugged, debugging

decision-maker, decision-making

deep space (noun); deep-space (adj.)

defence (*but* Department of Defense (United States))

deinstall

delegation, delegate (*not* Delegation, Delegate)

demise

dependant (noun)

dependency allowance

dependent (adj.)

depositary (of a text or instrument)

depository (warehouse)

Deputy Secretary-General

desktop

dialling

dial-up

digital selective calling; digital selective-calling system

digitalization: the move towards greater use of digital technology in a process, organization, industry, etc.

digitization: the conversion of analogue data into digital form

direction-finder

director general (pl. directors general) (*but* Director-General of the United Nations Offices and other specialized agencies

disk (computer)

dispatch (*not* despatch)

distance learning (noun); distance-learning (adj.)

dot-com

downlink

download

downtime

Dr

e- (all compound forms hyphenated, *except* for established names of organizations, applications, etc.)

e.g. (*not* followed by a comma)

Earth (only in specific reference to the planet); earth station

Earth-to-space

e-business

e-commerce

e-government

e-health

e-learning

e-mail

*en bloc*

*en route*

end user (noun); end-user (adj.)

endeavour

enrol, enrolment

ensure (make sure that)

enterprise

erratum (pl. errata) (no italics)

*et al.*

EUTELSAT

everyday (adj.)

ex officio (no italics)

expertise

extrabudgetary

extraterrestrial

*fait accompli*

fall back (verb); fall-back (adj.)

favour; favourable

feedback

feeder link (noun);   
feeder-link (adj.)

fibre (*not* fiber)

fibre-optic (adj.) (for noun, prefer optical fibre)

field strength (noun); field-strength (adj.)

fine-tune; fine-tuning

first harmonic (noun and adj.)

fixed-satellite service

flow chart; flow diagram

flux-density

focused, focusing

follow-up (noun); follow up (verb)

*force majeure*

forego (precede)

forgo (go without)

formulae (mathematical)

formulas (general)

forum (pl. forums)

franchise

frequency assignment to a station, of a network/system in/of a service

frequency-division multiple access

fulfil, fulfilment, fulfilled, fulfilling

fundraising

funds-in-trust

gauge

General Service (G.1, G.6, etc.)

generation (second-, third-, next-generation) (adj.)

geostationary-satellite orbit (GSO)

goodwill

government (adj.) (always lower case)

ground-air (adj.) (ICAO)

ground-ground (adj.) (ICAO)

groundwork

GSO; non-GSO (*not* NGSO)

guardband

hands-free (adj.)

hands-on (adj.)

hard-code (verb)

head of delegation

headquarters (*not* Headquarters)

health care (noun); health-care (adj.)

helpdesk

high frequency (noun and adj.)

high-altitude platform station (HAPS)

higher band (noun); higher-band (adj.)

highpass (adj.)

high-speed (adj.)

homepage

honour

hot spot

hypermedia

i.e. (no italics, preceded but *not* followed by a comma)

ibid. (no italics)

implementer (*not* implementor)

IMT (International Mobile Telecommunications)

inasmuch as

inbox

in-depth (adj.); in depth (pred.)

index (pl. indices [maths]; indexes [books])

infocommunication

information (no plural: refer to items or pieces of information, some information, or data)

information and communication technology (ICT; pl. ICTs)

information-sharing

infotainment

infrared

Inmarsat

in-person (adj.); in person (pred.)

in-session (adj.)

insofar as

install, installation

instalment

insure (take out insurance)

INTELSAT

*inter alia*

inter-agency

inter-American

intercede

interconnection

intergovernmental

Internet (as from PP-06)

Internet of Things (the), IoT (no article)

interoperability

interoperational

interplenipotentiary

interregional

interrelated

inter-satellite

intersector, intersectoral (*but* inter-Sector, inter-Sectoral when referring to the three ITU Sectors)

intersessional

interstate (within a country); inter-State (between countries)

intraregional

intra‑subregional

IP telephony

*ipso facto*

ITRs (International Telecommunication Regulations)

judgement

kilometre (km)

know-how (noun)

Kyiv (*not* Kiev)

label, labelled

labour

laissez-passer (no italics)

laptop

large-scale (adj.); large scale (pred.)

layout (noun); lay out (verb)

lead time

liaison

licence (noun)

license (verb), licensing, licensee

lifecycle

lifelong

lifestyle

lifetime

long-standing

long-term (adj.); long term (pred.)

low-Earth orbit (LEO)

lowpass (adj.)

machine translation

machine-translated

macroeconomic

main lobe

make-up (noun); make up (verb)

man-made noise (telecom. term: no gender-neutral alternative)

manoeuvre

many-sided

marketplace

Marrakesh (*not* Marrakech)

master plan

medium-term (adj.); medium term (pred.)

memorandum (pl. memoranda)

memorandum of understanding (MoU)

meter (instrument)

metre (unit of length)

MetSat

microcomputer

microeconomic

microfiche

microfilm

microprocessor

mid-1980s

mid-afternoon

midday

mileage

mindset

misspelled

mobile phone

mobile-satellite service

mock-up

modelled

MoU

Mr

Ms (*not* Miss or Mrs except when expressly requested by the person)

much-needed

multiband

multibeam

multichannel

multicopy

multicountry

multidimensional

multiframe

multifrequency

multilateral

multilingual

multimedia

multinational

multipath

multiplex

multipoint

multipurpose

multistakeholder

narrowband (adj.)

nationwide

neighbour

nevertheless

next-generation network(s)

night-time

no one

No. – omit after words like document, resolution, report (e.g. Document 10, Res. 6)

No., Nos. – to refer to provisions of the CS, CV, RR (e.g. No. 111, Nos. 19.45-19.52) (retain full stop in pl. abbrev.)

noncommittal

non‑existent

non‑governmental

non-GSO (*not* NGSO)

non-linear

north-east(ern)

north-west(ern)

note verbale (no italics) (pl. notes verbales)

occur, occurred; occurrence

offline

offset

offshore

old age (noun); old-age (adj.)

older persons (*not* elderly)

omnidirectional

on-board (adj.); on board (pred.); onboard (verb); onboarding

ongoing

online

on-site (adj.); on site (pred.)

op. cit. (no italics)

optical fibre (noun and adj.)

orbit raising (noun) orbit-raising (adj.)

organization, organize

out-of-date (adj.); out of date (pred.)

overboard (e.g. man overboard)

overestimate

overload

overvoltage

p. (abbrev. for page); plural pp.

packet-switched; packet-switching

pan-African

PANAFTEL

*par excellence*

para.; paras. (retain full stop in pl. abbrev.)

passband

payphone

per capita (no italics)

per cent; percentage

per diem (no italics)

*per se*

piecemeal

pipeline

point-to-multipoint

point-to-point

policy-maker, policy-making

post-conference

post-edit (verb); post-editing (noun)

postgraduate

postpaid

postpone

postscript

post-session

postwar

power flux-density

practice (noun)

practise (verb)

pre-assigned

précis-writing

pre-empt

pre-investment

prepaid

pre-session

principal (adj.)

principal (head person)

principle (noun)

printout (noun); print out (verb)

pro rata (no italics)

proactive

Prof.

Professional (P.3, P.5, etc.)

programme (*but* computer program)

pseudo-random

quasi-linear

*quater* (see *bis*)

radio astronomy (noun and adj.)

radio frequency (noun);   
radio-frequency (adj.)

radio horizon

radio propagation

radioactive

radiocommunication (adj.); radiocommunications (noun)

radiodetermination

radiolocation

radionavigation

radio-relay

radiotelegraphy

radiotelephone

rapporteur group

RASCOM

realize

re-establish

refarming (of spectrum)

region; Region (initial cap. only when referring to Regions defined in RR No. 5.2)

reinsure

relocate; relocatable

reorganize

replan, replanning, replanned

resilience (*preferred to* resiliency)

reuse; reusable

revise; reviser

rideshare

rigorous

rigour

ring tone (*not* ringing tone)

risk-management (adj.)

roadmap

roll call (noun) roll-call (adj.)

roll out (verb); roll-out (noun)

roundtable (noun and adj.)

second harmonic (noun and adj.)

second-generation network

secretariat (*not* Secretariat, except for ITU General Secretariat)

Secretary-General (ITU, UN)

sectoral (general); Sectoral (ITU Sector)

session (*not* Session)

set-back (noun)

set-up (noun); set up (verb)

sharepoint

Sharm el-Sheikh

shortlist (noun and verb)

short-term (adj.); short term (pred.)

side lobe

sideband

skilful

skill set

small and medium[[6]](#footnote-6) enterprises (SMEs)

small-scale (adj.); small scale (pred.)

smart sustainable cities and communities (SSC&C)

smartcard

smartphone

SMS

socio-economic

sound programme (noun); sound-programme (adj.)

south-east(ern)

south-west(ern)

SpaceCom (software)

space-to-Earth

space-to-space

specialize

spread-spectrum (adj.)

staffing table (*not* manning table)

standalone

standards-development organization (SDO)

standby (noun and adj.); stand by (verb)

start-up (noun and adj.); start up (verb)

State (capitalized if referring to a country) (adj. and noun)

state-of-the-art (adj.);   
state of the art (pred.)

States parties (*but* “States Parties to this Convention, Treaty, etc.” within those instruments)

stationary (i.e. “not moving”)

stationery (writing materials)

status quo (no italics)

stocktaking

straightforward

subaddress

subassembly

sub-band

subcommittee

subdirectorate

subdivision

subgroup

subheading

sub-item

subject matter

submarine

subnetwork

sub-orbital

subparagraph

subregion; subregional

sub-Saharan

subsection

sub-subgroup

subsystem

subtotal

sub-working group (when capitalized: Sub-Working Group)

sunspot

super higher band (noun); super higher-band (adj.)

supergroup

superrefractivity

supersede

supervise

supervisor

surprise

switchover

symposium (pl. symposia)

synchronize

synthesis; synthesize

task force

telebiometrics

telecommand

telecommunication (adj.); telecommunications (noun)

teleconference

teledensity

tele-education

telehealth (prefer e-health)

telelearning

telemedicine

televise

telework

ten: *use* 10

*ter* (see *bis*)

test bed

test bench

text processing (noun)

textbook

text-processing (adj.)

the ITU web

the web; the worldwide web

third-generation network

time-consuming

time-division multiple access

time‑frame

time-limit

timeline

time-scale

timetable

tonne (metric unit of weight)

totalling

towards

trademark

transatlantic

transborder

transboundary

transequatorial

trans-horizon

travelling

turnkey

twofold

two-thirds (noun)

type approval (noun);   
type-approval (adj.)

ultra-wideband

under way (*not* underway)

underdeveloped

underestimate

under-represented

undersea

underserved

underutilize

UNESCO (*not* Unesco)

UNICEF (*not* Unicef)

unidirectional

updated

upgrade; upgradable

uplink

up-to-date (adj.); up to date (pred.)

usability

usable

use case

user-friendly (adj.); user-friendliness

value-added (adj.)

versus, abbreviated to vs (no full stop)

vice versa (no italics)

vice-chair (when capitalized: Vice-Chair)

videoconference

videotelephony

viewpoint

vis‑à‑vis (no italics)

voiceband

waveform

waveguide

wavelength

webcast

webpage

website

weekday

weekend

well-being

well-known (adj.);   
well known (pred.)

west/West, western/Western (capitalize if the word is used to indicate a political grouping of countries, even informal, or to designate a major region of the globe, e.g. West Africa)

wideband

Wi-Fi

wireless, wireline

word processing (noun); word‑processing (adj.)

work plan

workload

workstation

WorldTel

worldwide

X-ray

year end (noun and pred.);   
year-end (adj.)

yearbook

year-long

1. 1 It should be noted that the spelling in the regional spelling-check packages provided with MS Word does **not** correspond to ITU spelling and should thus be used with caution. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 2 This general rule applies to legal, formal, literary and narrative texts; in scientific, technical and statistical contexts, figures are used almost exclusively. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 3 This rule has been adopted in order to avoid potential confusion that may arise on account of the different usage of commas and periods in the different languages, and to facilitate copying, pasting and importing of electronic files containing tables in a multilingual environment. Subject to internal consistency within documents, however, some flexibility is tolerated. One alternative commonly adopted as it also functions across languages is the use of an apostrophe (e.g. 7’654’321 instead of 7 654 321). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 4 Two-letter or even one-letter abbreviations such as the above examples are often used in working documents of the Sectors as a local shorthand. In such cases, there is no space between the abbreviation and the number, i.e. SG3, WP3/4, Q22/2, with the exception of abbreviations for ITU-R study groups and working parties: SG 1, WP 1A. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 5 Note that, in such lists, there is usually no comma before the last item introduced by "and", unless one is useful or necessary for clarity (cf. The Oxford comma, under *Punctuation* above). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. ITU increasingly prefers this formulation (rather than “small and medium-sized enterprises”). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)