**ITU**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
STYLE GUIDE**

**English Translation Section**

**Conferences and Publications Department**

**Last updated: 30 November 2016**

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| **Changes in this update of the Style Guide**  🞄 In the section on “Spelling”, new information on the ITU Library resources, including online dictionaries  🞄 A new section entitled “Adjectives”, dealing specifically with the position and meaning of certain adjectives |

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| 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. |

# 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 Translation 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 <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 Translation Section (e-mail: richard.granger@itu.int ).

For items not covered in this guide, the reader may also wish to refer to the United Nations Editorial Manual, at <http://dd.dgacm.org/editorialmanual/>.

**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

Anyone interested in improving their writing skills might usefully refer to the following sources:

* ***Writing for the United Nations: an online learning programme***

This online course developed within the UN is made available under the Joint Training Ventures programme of the International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications (IAMLADP), and can be accessed at:

<http://dd.dgacm.org/editorialmanual/training/Index.htm>

* **EU *Clear Writing Campaign***

A short and informative EU brochure on “*How to write clearly*”, prepared as part of the EU’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 United Nations practice, the spelling given in the current edition of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (COD) should generally be followed. Where alternative forms are given in the COD, the preferred spelling should be used. The preferred spelling is the one which is presented first (e.g. "judgement, judgment": use "judgement"; "adviser (also *disp*. 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 ITU library is subscribed to many online resources (see the complete guide at: <http://libraryguides.itu.int/library/digital>), including online dictionaries. Full access to those e‑dictionaries is restricted to onsite users (PCs or mobile devices within the ITU network) or to users connected to the ITU network via a remote desktop session.

For external users, the Oxford Dictionaries website is at: <http://oxforddictionaries.com/?attempted=true>.

## 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 COD.

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 development is a key issue”

**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 Concise Oxford Dictionary .

“Data” is a plural word, and thus calls for a plural verb (e.g. "More data are necessary..."), and the plural of “Bureau” is “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 Concise Oxford Dictionary.

# 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;

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.

Note, however, that 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") are always hyphenated (e-commerce, e-health, e-government, e-business, e-learning, etc.). To remain consistent with this rule, e-mail is also written with a hyphen in ITU texts.

On the other hand, the growing number of words beginning with the prefix “cyber” are not hyphenated (cyberspace, cybersecurity, cyberattack, cybercrime, etc.)

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 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 preferable, 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 excellent brief overview of the use of punctuation marks may be found in an appendix to the Concise Oxford Dictionary.

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

# 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”)

etc.

# NUMBERS

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

Numbers from one to ten should be spelled out in full in the body of the text:

"The conference, attended by 155 delegates, adopted two resolutions, eight recommendations and ten 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" and "billion", 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 per cent CHF 400 3 km  
 7 MHz page 5 Chapter 4  
 Figure 2 example 6 10 Mbit/s

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. The word "trillion" is best avoided as being unclear; use instead 1 000 billion.

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.

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)

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.

For periods or ranges, either a dash or "from … to …" may be used, but not a combination of the two:

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

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".

## Decimals and fractions

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

1. per cent

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)

It is often convenient to convert vulgar fractions into decimals:

0.1, 0.04, 1.5, 8.75

**Ordinals**

Ordinal numbers are spelled out up to and including "tenth"; figures are used from "11th" onwards, except when reference is made to centuries:

Eighth session, 14th session, 171st session

The ninth reason is that…

In the nineteenth century

For simplicity, the ordinal suffix (i.e. st, nd, rd or th) is written in normal type on the line, and not as a superscript.

## 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).

# PROPER NAMES

# Names of countries

For political reasons, care must be taken when referring to countries. Each Member State selects two variants - a long name for official use (e.g. Principality of Andorra) and a short name for everyday use (e.g. Andorra) - in the six official languages. These names shall be used to the exclusion of all others. They are given in the list maintained by the Corporate Governance and Membership unit (CGM) at <http://www.itu.int/online/mm/scripts/membstat>.

Adjectives of nationality (e.g. Beninese, Cape Verdean, Swazi) are given in a United Nations terminology bulletin (ST/CS/SER.F/347/Rev.1), which is available in the Reference Service of the Conferences and Publications Department.

In lists of countries in important documents with official status, the French alphabetical order must be followed, in line with the official list maintained by CGM.

For countries whose names are preceded by the definite article in running text (e.g. "the Netherlands" or "the United Kingdom"), the article should normally be omitted from tables, headings and lists (other than lists in running text).

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 systems").

## 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 Times Atlas of the World should be used as a reference.

## Names of organizations

When an organization or entity 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. Pan 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.*

Useful sources include the ITU Global Directory (<http://www.itu.int/GlobalDirectory/>) and ITU telecommunication terminology database (TERMITE) (<http://www.itu.int/terminology/index.html>).

## Names of ITU conferences

The correct way of referring to ITU conferences is by giving the full name followed, in parenthesis (not between commas), by the place (town only) and the year (four digits), separated by a comma, e.g. Plenipotentiary Conference (Guadalajara, 2010), World Administrative Radio Conference for Dealing with Frequency Allocations in Certain Parts of the Spectrum (Malaga-Torremolinos, 1992), World Telecommunication Development Conference (Hyderabad, 2010), World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (Dubai, 2012).

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‑14, WTSA-08, WRC‑97, WRC-12, WTPF-09, WTDC-10, WTDC-14, WCIT-12. 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‑14” or “C-14”. Note that we say “the Council” and not simply “Council” (except in abbreviations of the type “Council-14”).

**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) and the Plenipotentiary Conference (Guadalajara, 2010). The latter five plenipotentiary conferences adopted only amending instruments to the 1992 text. It is thus legally (and politically) incorrect to refer to the Constitution or Convention (Guadalajara, 2010), 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, 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”. 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 such like 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 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 a session of the conference, for example “… to be submitted to the next plenipotentiary conference” or “… to be submitted to the 2014 plenipotentiary conference”.

*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. | As expected, Committee 7 did not complete its work; the document was submitted direct to the plenary via the Editorial Committee. |
| 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. |
| 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 chairmen of committees can co‑opt experts as rapporteurs of ad hoc groups. | The Chairman of Committee 6 called upon the Vice-Chairman of Committee 5 to convene Ad hoc Group 6/1. |

## 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 are often be avoided by using the § sign - §§ for plural, space after the § sign, 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”.

The one 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, … |
| *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 Chairman 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.

## 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)

Member State  
Sector Member

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

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

the Sector(s)  
(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 Bureau(x)

the General Secretariat  
(but: the secretariat; the TELECOM secretariat)

the Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General

the Constitution, the Convention, the Administrative Regulations

the Radio Regulations, the International Telecommunication Regulations

the Staff Rules and Regulations, 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

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

delegate, delegation

observer

ITU budget

strategic plan for 2011-2015

financial plan

operational plan

study period

information society

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 (NB. *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 used primarily in development matters (Arab States region, CIS region, Americas region, Asia-Pacific region, etc.).

# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

# General principles

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.

Thus, two-letter abbreviations, which are often highly ambiguous, should not be used (e.g MS can stand for a host of different terms: Member State, mobile service, mobile station, maritime station, multiple sclerosis, etc.; SG can stand for Secretary-General, study group, etc.).[[4]](#footnote-4)\*

Some abbreviations are introduced purely for convenience in one particular document. 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 general 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 may not 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 an example, the abbreviation e.i.r.p. (equivalent isotropically radiated power) would fall into category b) in a technical document relating to application of the Radio Regulations for experts, but would come under a) in a general article on telecommunications for a lay reader.

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. However, 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, etc.

# 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 the definite article with abbreviations

The policy followed in ITU is to omit the definite article before abbreviations and acronyms identifying organizations or entities (e.g. ITU, *not* the ITU; UNDP, *not* the UNDP; BR, TSB and BDT, *not* the BR, the TSB and the BDT. Hence also the Director of BR, Director of TSB and Director of BDT).

# Punctuation in abbreviations

A full stop (period) is normally used at the end of an abbreviated word when the word is truncated, such 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, such 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)

No. 123 but Nos 123 and 124

Note the following forms, however: p. 1, pp. 1-9

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 <http://www.iso.org/iso/currency_codes> .

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:

<https://intranet.itu.int/gs/afd/Pages/Organizational_Charts.aspx>

The Terminology, References and Computer Aids to Translation Section compiles a list of ITU organizational units in the six official languages, including the corresponding abbreviations, which may be consulted on the intranet at:

<http://intweb/lingterm/TradPage/bookr1.htm>

Note that the unit responsible for telecommunication exhibitions and forums is always referred to as ITU Telecom (not simply “Telecom”), in “small caps”

**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)

# LAYOUT

Templates

With the introduction of electronic media, templates for the major types of document have been developed by the ITU Template Group and the Document Composition Service of the Conferences and Publications Department, 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.)[[5]](#footnote-5)5 .

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, …etc.). Longer numbers of the form 3.21.2.41 are cumbersome and can easily cause confusion in a meeting, especially through the interpretation.

Titles and headings

There have never been any standard rules in ITU for the treatment of titles, headings and such like. 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 or the Document Composition 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.[[6]](#footnote-6)6

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 be set out as indents or bullet points, introduced by a colon.

Examples of three commonly used formats are provided below.

***Format A***

If each item comprises less than a compete sentence, the list is actually a single large 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.

This is the simplest option, and one which is increasingly advocated, and commonly found, for example, in ITU-T Recommendations.

***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 semi-colon, 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.

***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, according to the official ITU list of Member States (see section on *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.

Resolutions, recommendations, decisions and opinions

**Resolutions, recommendations, decisions and opinions of conferences/assemblies**

Resolutions, recommendations, decisions and opinions of conferences 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 semi-colons (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. Henceforth, this will no longer be the case and resolutions and decisions will remain in force unless abrogated or revised by a subsequent plenipotentiary conference.

As a result, the place-name and date in parenthesis 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 56 (Kyoto, 1994)  
Resolution 80 (Rev. Marrakesh, 2002)

Resolution 111 (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010)

Resolution 71 (Rev. Busan, 2014)

In view of this measure, it is often possible to omit any explicit reference to the conference as the adopting body, since this will be implicit in the number. In some cases, however, such as highly official texts, including the basic instruments and such resolutions/recommendations themselves, or in documents for readers who are not familiar with the organization, reference to the Plenipotentiary Conference may be necessary. In this case, suggested options are:

Resolution 98 (Minneapolis, 1998) of the Plenipotentiary Conference (Minneapolis, 1998)   
Resolution 98 (Minneapolis, 1998) of the Plenipotentiary Conference  
PP-98 Resolution 98 (Minneapolis, 1998).

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 79 (Dubai, 2014) 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 614 (WRC-07), Resolution 76 (WRC-2000), 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, there is a trend towards harmonization and one will increasingly see the place and date specified, resulting in formulations like: Resolution ITU-R 7-2 (Geneva, 2012).

Specific editorial rules for resolutions

Detailed guidance on the specific editorial rules for resolutions of ITU conferences is available on request from the English Translation Section ([richard.granger@itu.int](mailto:richard.granger@itu.int)).

**ITU-R and ITU-T Recommendations**

Detailed guidance on the specific editorial rules for ITU-R and ITU-T Recommendations are developed by the respective Sectors and are 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-sensitive 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. Some general guidance is given in paragraphs 1 to 9 below.

1 As indicated in the footnote to the ITU Constitution and Convention, referring to Resolution 70 (Rev. Marrakesh, 2002), 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.

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

3 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 [Mr Touré] and *his* staff….; The Chairman of the Council [Ms Heceta] said that *she* would… ; The delegate of Denmark said that *her* delegation was… .

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

5 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").

6 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.

7 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" (Concise Oxford Dictionary), 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.

8 There may, however, 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 "man-made disasters", 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.

9. One important example of this is the term "chairman". In accordance with the decision taken by the ITU Council at its 2000 session, the term "chairman" (and related terms such as "vice-chairman", "chairmanship", etc.) shall be considered as being gender neutral in documents of the Union. Accordingly, "**chairman**" shall be used throughout ITU as the single, uniform term to designate the presiding officers of conferences and other meetings.[[7]](#footnote-7)7

10. 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, ITU texts may refer to “women and men” and “ladies and gentlemen”, but “male and female” and “Sir/Madam”.

# 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,

[signature]

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 K. Annan 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**

about

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

above-mentioned

addendum (pl. addenda)

ad hoc (no italics)

ad hoc group (when capitalized: Ad hoc Group)

*ad interim* (but a.i.)

administration (but the French Administration)

administrative circular (no hyphen)

advertise

advise, adviser (not advisor), advisable

aesthetic

aforementioned

Africa ONE

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‑conditioned

aircraft (sing. and pl.)

allot, allotted, allotment

analogue

analyse

antennas

a posteriori

apprise

a priori

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 (noun)

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)

bilateral

bimonthly

*bis* (e.g. 1*bis*)

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

bits per second; bit/s; kbit/s; Mbit/s; Gbit/s

bona fide (no italics)

bookkeeping

bottleneck

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

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

break through (verb); breakthrough (noun)

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

broadband

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-by-case (adj.)

case law

case study

catalogue

catalyse

CD-ROM

cellphone; cellular phone

centre, centred, centring

centre of excellence

chairman (not chairperson, chairwoman, chair)

channelled, channelling

chargé d’affaires (pl. chargés)

chat room

checklist

check-up (noun)

*chef de cabinet*

cheque (bank)

circuit-switched; circuit-switching

circular letter (no hyphen)

clearing house

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

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)

comprise

compromise

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-benefit

cost centre

cost‑effective (adj.); cost effective (pred.); cost-effectiveness (noun)

cost-oriented (in preference to cost-orientated)

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

councillor (member of the ITU Council)

counsellor, senior counsellor

countermeasure

counterproductive

counter-revolution

counterterrorism

coup d’état (pl. coups d’état)

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.)

cybersecurity; cybercafé; cyberterrorism; cyberattack; cyberthreat; etc.

databank

database

data centre

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

daytime

deadline

debug, debugged, debugging

*de facto*

decision-maker, decision-making

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

defence (but Department of Defense (United States))

deinstall

de jure

delegation, delegate (not Delegation, Delegate)

demise

dependant (noun)

dependency allowance

dependent (adj.)

depositary (of a text or instrument)

depository (warehouse)

Deputy Secretary-General

desktop

despatch (see dispatch)

devise

dialling;

dial-up

digital selective calling; digital selective-calling system

digitize (not digitalize), digitization

direction-finder

director-general (pl. directors-general)

disk (computer)

dispatch (not despatch)

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

dot-com

DOTforce

downlink

download

downtime

Dr

e- (all compound forms hyphenated)

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

Earth-to-space

e-business

e-commerce

e.g. (not followed by a comma)

e-government

e-health

e-learning

e-mail

*en bloc*

endeavour

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

enrol, enrolment

*en route*

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

favour; favourable

feedback

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

fibre (not fiber)

fibre-optic (adj.) (use optical fibre)

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

first harmonic (noun and adj.)

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-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

groundwork

GSO; non-GSO (not NGSO)

guardband

hands-free

head of delegation

headquarters (not Headquarters)

health care (noun); healthcare (adj.)

helpdesk

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

highpass (adj.)

homepage

honour

hot spot

hypermedia

*ibid.*

i.e. (not italics, not followed by a comma)

implementer (not implementorr)

improvise

inasmuch as

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 technologies (ICTs)

infotainment

infrared

Inmarsat

in-session (adj.)

insofar as

install, installation

instalment

insure (take out insurance)

INTELSAT

inter-agency

*inter alia*

inter-American

intercede

interconnection

intergovernmental

Internet (as from PP-06)

interplenipotentiary

interregional

interrelated

inter-satellite

intersessional

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

intraregional

intra‑subregional

*ipso facto*

IP telephony

IsAP: Istanbul Action Plan (WTDC-02)

ISUP'92

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

lifelong

lifestyle

lifetime

long-standing

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

low-Earth orbit (LEO)

lowpass (adj.)

macroeconomic

main lobe

make-up (noun)

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

manning table (use staffing table)

manoeuvre

many-sided

marketplace

Marrakesh (not Marrakech)

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

memorandum (pl. memoranda)

memorandum of understanding (MoU)

merchandise

meter (instrument)

metre (unit of length)

MetSat

microcomputer

microeconomic

microfiche

microfilm

microprocessor

mid-1980s

mid-afternoon

midday

midnight

mileage

mindset

misspelled

mobile phone

mobile-satellite service

mock-up

modelled

MoU

Mr

Mrs (prefer: Ms)

Ms

Miss (prefer: Ms)

much-needed

multiband

multibeam

multichannel

multicopy

multidimensional

multiframe

multifrequency

multilateral

multimedia

multilingual

multinational

multipath

multiplex

multipoint

multipurpose

multistakeholder

narrowband (adj.)

nationwide

neighbour

nevertheless

next-generation network(s)

night-time

No. - to be omitted after words like document, resolution, report (e.g. Document 10, Res. 6)

no one

non‑existent

non‑governmental

non-GSO (not NGSO)

non-linear

noncommittal

nonetheless

north-east(ern)

north-west(ern)

note verbale (no italics)

occur, occurred, occurrence

offline

offset

offshore

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

omnidirectional

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

ongoing

online

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

optical fibre (noun and adj.)

organization, organize

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

overall

overboard (e.g. man overboard)

overestimate

overload

overvoltage

packet-switced; packet-switching

pan-African

PANAFTEL

*par excellence*

passband

payphone

per capita (no italics)

per cent; percentage

per diem (no italics)

*per se*

piecemeal

pipeline

point-to-point

point-to-multipoint

policy-maker, policy-making

post-conference

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)

proactive

Prof.

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

programme (but computer program)

pro rata (no italics)

pseudo-random

quasi-linear

*quater* (e.g. 2 *quater*)

radioactive

radio astronomy (noun and adj.)

radiocommunication (adj.); radiocommunications (noun)

radiodetermination

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

radio horizon

radiolocation

radionavigation

radio propagation

radio-relay

radiotelegraphy

radiotelephone

rapporteur group

RASCOM

re-establish

realize

reinsure

relocate; relocatable

reorganize

replan, replanning, replanned

reuse; reusable

revise

rigorous

rigour

ring tone (not ringing tone)

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

roundtable (noun); roundtable (adj.)

second-generation network

second harmonic (noun and adj.)

secretariat (not Secretariat, except in the ITU General Secretariat)

Secretary-General (ITU, UN)

sectoral (general); Sectoral (ITU Sector)

separate

session (not Session)

set-back (noun)

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

Sharm el-Sheikh

short list

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

sideband

side lobe

skilful

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

socio-economic

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

south-east(ern)

south-west(ern)

SPACECOM

space-to-Earth

space-to-space

specialize

staffing table (not manning table)

standalone

standby (noun); stand by (verb)

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

State (meaning country)

state (other meanings)

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

stationary (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

subparagraph

subregion; subregional

sub-Saharan

subsection

sub-subgroup

subsystem

subtropical

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

sunspot

supergroup

super higher-band (adj.)

superrefractivity

supersede

supervise

supervisor

surprise

symposium (pl. symposia)

synchronize

synthesis, synthesize

telebiometrics

telecommunication (adj.); telecommunications (noun)

TELECOM (exhibitions, secretariat), e.g. Asia TELECOM-97

telecommand

teleconference

tele-education

telehealth (prefer e-health)

telelearning

telemedicine

televise

telework

*ter* (e.g. 2*ter*)

testbed

textbook

third-generation network

time-consuming

time-division multiple access

time‑frame

time-limit

time-scale

timetable

totalling

trademark

transatlantic

transborder

transboundary

transequatorial

trans-horizon

travelling

turnkey

twofold

two-thirds (noun)

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

ultra-wideband

underdeveloped

undersea

under way (not underway)

underestimate

underserved

underutilize

UNESCO (not Unesco)

unidirectional

uplink

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

updated

upgrade; upgradable

upload

usability

usable

user-friendly (adj.); user-friendliness

value-added (adj.)

vice-chairman; Vice-Chairman

vice versa (no italics)

videocassette

videoconference

videotelephony

viewpoint

vis‑à‑vis (no italics)

voiceband

versus, abbreviated to vs (no full stop)

waveform

waveguide

wavelength

the web; the WWW

the ITU web

webcast

webpage

website

weekday

weekend

well-being

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

wideband

Wi-Fi

wireless, wireline

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

workload

work plan

workstation

WorldTel

worldwide

worthwhile

X-ray

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. \* Note, however, that in working documents of the Sectors, some two-letter or even one-letter abbreviations are inevitably used as a local shorthand, e.g. SG for study group, WP for working party, Q for Question, etc. In such cases, there is no space between the abbreviation and the number, i.e. SG3, WP3/4, Q22/2. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 5 For any inquiries concerning templates and models, contact the Document Composition Service (e‑mail: [jacqueline.jones-ferrer@itu.int](mailto:jacqueline.jones-ferrer@itu.int) ) . [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 6 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 7 Note, however, that this instruction relates only to documents emanating from the secretariat and to official texts of the Union. Contributions and inputs from Member States, Sector Members and other organizations and entities authorized to participate in the work of ITU, which are entitled to employ their own terminology, must not be modified. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)