

English Translation Section – United Nations Office at Geneva

Section Notes – Combined

These notes were written to help clarify the content of the DGACM Editorial Manual and the Instructions for Translators and provide some guidance on language policies and editorial points where frequent questions have been raised in connection with Geneva-specific aspects of editorial conventions. The contents list is as follows:

Editorial

[Accents on capital letters \(French and Spanish\)](#)

[Acronyms/abbreviations \(definite articles, UN bodies, grey areas, frequency of occurrence, internal State bodies, headings/titles, foreign acronyms, acronyms at beginning of reports\)](#)

[Capitalization \(State, Government, ministries, programmes, slogans, plans, policies, strategies, systems, networks\)](#)

[Currency units \(Editorial Manual, practice\)](#)

[Country and place names \(names of countries, names of places, Falkland Islands \(Malvinas\), Occupied Palestinian Territory, State of Palestine\)](#)

[Numbers \(when referring to prison sentences\)](#)

[Punctuation \(in bulleted lists, commas in restrictive and non-restrictive clauses, commas in pairs\)](#)

[Laws and the Official Gazette \(titles of laws, parts of laws, ILO conventions, the Official Gazette\)](#)

Policy

[References and authoritative sources \(reliability, what to check, hierarchy of sources\)](#)

[Errors in documents](#)

[Reprise \(definition, general principle\)](#)

[NGOs \(if and when to translate\)](#)

Translation

[Standard wording \(Accreditation status of national human rights institutions, combined periodic reports, replies to lists of issues\)](#)

[Curricula vitae \(Qualifications, academic institutions, administrative and legal designations, publications, decorations\)](#)

[Footnotes \(guidelines and examples\)](#)

[Terminology \(treaties, disabilities, legal remedies, official names and titles\)](#)

Editorial**Accents on capital letters in French and Spanish**

French and Spanish words featuring capital letters should have accents on letters that would bear accents if they were lowercase.

Acronyms and Abbreviations (see [DGACM Editorial Manual](#)).

Basic rule: spell out title first time around (with acronym in brackets) and then use the acronym (note that HIV/AIDS does not need to be written out on first occurrence)

1. Definite article and Saxon genitive with acronyms or initialisms

Do not use the definite article or the Saxon genitive with either acronyms or initialisms referring to organizations ("As noted, ILO has no policy on this issue....", "In July, WTO issued a directive...", "WHO staff", not "WHO's staff") When an acronym does not refer to an organization, the article can be used (the ILO policy; the WTO report; the CPI).

2. Organizations, programmes and regional commissions of the United Nations

Acronyms can be used for existing organizations, specialized agencies, programmes and regional commissions: UNICEF, ESCWA, UNHCR, ECA, etc.

However, it is not possible to use acronyms if: you are referring to organizations that do not exist or have yet to be established; are making them up yourself, the acronyms are insider jargon (e.g. MINSAL, MFA) or you are referring to countries (USA, FYROM, UK).

3. Grey areas

The rule of thumb here is to take account of the context, the readership, the frequency of occurrence in the text and whether the referent is better known by its acronym/abbreviation.

Examples:

- (a) United Nation offices, divisions and departments

Acronyms for divisions and departments should not be used. Consider using short forms, e.g. "the Division", "the Department" etc.,

- (c) Regional groups and negotiating clusters

"G-77 and China" has become the accepted designation. There is no point spelling it out; it is no longer a group of 77 States anyway. G-8 has no expansion. JUSCANZ/JUSSCANZ, JUSSCANNZ, GRULAC, WEOG - to be avoided, but depending on the context, might be used in internal documents.

- (d) Informal groupings of countries

CEITS, SIDS, NIS, etc. - to be avoided as far as possible, because not everyone will know or remember what they mean, but depends on context.

If spelling them out would leave the reader confused about what convention you are talking about, since the convention is better known by its acronym (e.g. CITES), it may be better to use the acronym. Again, the readership rule should apply.

4. Frequency of occurrence

Abbreviations are not used for names or titles that occur only once or twice in a text. However, for entities better known by the abbreviation or acronym (e.g. WWF, INTERPOL, UNICEF) or that use a foreign-language acronym which is different from the English title (FIDH), it may be preferable to include the abbreviation, even if the name occurs only once.

5. Internal State bodies

In general, avoid using acronyms for bodies in the reporting State, unless the context suggests otherwise (they have a very long title and are referred to frequently in the text, for example).

6. Headings and titles

Abbreviations and acronyms should not normally be used in headings and titles.

7. Foreign acronyms

When giving a courtesy translation, follow this order:

Foreign title (English translation) (foreign acronym)

Example

l'Association tunisienne du planning familial (Tunisian Family Planning Association)
(ATPF)

Never invent an English acronym (so, in the above example, you would never use TFPA). For details on when to translate names of NGOs, see [Note on NGOs and other organizations](#)

8. Lists of acronyms/abbreviations at the beginning of a report

The lists under this heading are often provided by the authors of a report to help the reader understand those being referred to in the text. As they are often a mix of bona fide and invented acronyms/abbreviations, the practice is not to translate them at all or to use only those cited in the report. If in doubt, please check with the contact point for the document being worked on.

Capitalization

Government

Capitalize the noun (singular/plural, definite/indefinite) when it refers to a State:

the Government of India
any Government wishing to participate
all Governments concerned
Head of Government

But lowercase the noun when referring to an abstract concept or to a subnational level of government:

a system of government
a local or municipal government
the government of the State of Chiapas

a transitional government (but capitalize when established under a peace agreement)
a change of government

Do not capitalize the adjective:

a government department
a government official
government spending

Ministries

Use lower case for “ministries” when it is not used to refer to specific, named ministries, e.g. “the health ministries of Denmark, Norway and Sweden”; “the strategic objectives to be applied across all ministries”; “submit the present concluding observations to all relevant ministries”. Capitalize when citing the names of specific ministries, e.g. “the Ministries of Health and Social Welfare, Education and Worship, Agriculture, and Justice and Labour”.

Capitalize the noun (singular/plural, definite/indefinite) and adjective when referring to a country:

the French State
many States were represented
a State-owned enterprise
inter-State (between countries)
State spending plans
State funding

Otherwise lowercase it, except when giving the name of a state in a federation

an interstate highway links states within a country
the state government
at the federal and state level
state spending plans
state funding

but

the State of Chiapas
the State of New York

Note: “State funding” is funding at the national level; “state funding” is at the level of a state in a federation.

Autonomous communities (of Spain)

“Autonomous communities” is lower-cased when used in general references but capitalized when used in a specific reference, per the guidance in the Editorial Manual:

So: “all the **a**utonomous **c**ommunities have rules in place to...” but “the **A**utonomous **C**ommunities of Galicia and La Rioja have agreed to...”.

Translated names of country programmes, plans, strategies, policies, etc.

The fewer the caps, the easier it is for the translator to work around variations in the original wording. That being said, proper nouns of course need to be capitalized.

Context permitting, it is often easier (and more idiomatic) to translate descriptively, even if there is an official title in the original. For instance, the phrase "la estrategia Mujeres Jefas de Hogar y Mujeres con Discapacidad Micro-empendedoras" might be better rendered as "strategy to support women heads of household and women micro-entrepreneurs with disabilities" than through an initial-capped proper noun.

The guidance below is intended as a working approach for country-level terms not in official term databases.

Some specific categories

1. **Slogans.** Titles that are made up of a slogan or cannot be interpreted descriptively are treated as a proper noun. Use quotation marks and initial caps:

the "Affection Leaves its Mark" campaign
 the "Blue and White" project
 the "Zero Dropouts" strategy
 the "Sure Start" programme
 the "Head Start" programme
 the "Chile Grows with You" programme/system
 the "My Opinion Counts" nationwide surveys
 the "From Zero to Always" strategy
 the "Safe Summer" campaign
 the "Young People on the Move" initiative

Bear in mind that for established international-level titles the treatment can vary:

the "Heart of Asia" initiative
 the "Delivering as one" initiative
 the Paris Pact initiative
 the White Helmets initiative
 the Aid for Trade initiative
 the Zero Hunger Challenge initiative
 the Action against Hunger and Poverty initiative

2. **Surveys/censuses.** Use lower case:

the national housing survey
 the 2010 national census
 the second national study on disability
 the 2001 census of indigenous communities
 the 2007 integrated household survey
 the five-yearly social and economic survey

3. **Plans.** Use initial caps for named national plans (with or without dates):

the National Plan for Equality and Non-Discrimination
 the National Action Plan for Children and Young Persons
 the 2002-2007 National Economic and Social Development Plan
 the National Mental Health and Psychiatric Care Plan
 Plan of Action to Combat Xenophobia and Racial and Ethnic Discrimination in
 Ukrainian Society for the Period 2010-2012

If the reference is generic or descriptive in nature, use lower case throughout:

the national health insurance plan
to formulate a national disability plan
a special health plan for ethnic groups

4. **Policies.** Use initial caps for named national policies:

the National Disability Policy
the National Youth Policy
the 2003 Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy

If the reference is generic or descriptive in nature, use lower case throughout:

the national policy on the comprehensive care of children and young people
the country's food security policy
in line with national rural development policy

5. **Programmes and projects.** Use initial caps for established programmes/projects:

the Access to Medicines Programme
the Education for Life Programme
the Comprehensive Rehabilitation Programme of the Ministry of Health

the Education for Life and Work Programme
the Transition to Adult Life Project
the Libraries for Peace Project
the Chile Solidario Programme
the Tekoporã and Abrazo Programmes [of Paraguay]

If having the original language might be helpful (e.g., when a title has been translated different ways in other texts), translators may wish to include the original (without italics, as it is considered a proper noun):

the Chilean Seal of Inclusion (Sello Chile Inclusivo) Programme

If the reference is generic or descriptive in nature, use lower case throughout:

a home day-care programme
the country's epidemiology programme for the period 2004-2005

6. **Strategies.** Use initial caps for established strategies, but lower case for descriptive ones:

the National Strategy to Eliminate Child Labour
the 2012-2020 National Health Strategy

the community-based rehabilitation strategy
the primary health care strategy

7. **Systems.** Use initial caps for named systems, but lower case whenever they can be interpreted descriptively:

the European System of Accounts
the System of National Accounts
the Federal Prison Crisis Response System

the United Nations common system
 the national social security system
 the national system for the protection of children's rights

8. **Networks.** Use initial caps for named networks that are equivalent to organizations:

the Mayors' Network of Friends and Defenders of Children
 the Inter-University Human Rights Network
 the African Network for Drugs and Diagnostics Innovation
 the Réseaux IP européens Network Coordination Centre

Otherwise, use lower case (keeping any proper nouns in initial caps):

the country's social welfare network
 the Enlaces digital education network [of Chile]

Currency units

Editorial Manual

“Abbreviations and symbols for units of currency should be used only if it is absolutely clear to what currency reference is made.”

Practice

See *UNTERM* country name entry for descriptive designation (e.g. “Chilean pesos”) and currency abbreviation (Ch\$)

There’s usually no need to spell out “dollars” or “euros” or “pounds”. Just use the \$ and € and £ signs.

US\$: You only need to use “US\$” where there is ambiguity or a policy decision to use it. Err on the side of caution! (Remember, the dollar sign is used to represent other currencies too.)

You would normally introduce other currencies before moving to the abbreviation, e.g. CFA francs (CFAF).

If the currency unit is written out in full, it follows the figure:

25,000 Swiss francs
 500 Swedish kronor

If an abbreviation or symbol is used, it comes before the figure:

SwF 25,000
 SKr 500
 €1.5 million

No space after a symbol:

\$5 million
 €473,000

Otherwise (i.e. when the abbreviation is a letter or letters or a combination of letters and symbols), use a space:

F 150,000
 US\$ 55

CFAF 145

Country and place names in United Nations documents

Country names

Use standard approved forms for the adjective of nationality or the name of a State or country (see COUNTRIES data set in [UNTerm](#)) in documents originating from the United Nations.

Keep the designation used by the original author in translations of documents submitted by Member States.

Place 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, Pago Pago, Singapore, Strasbourg, Wroclaw). Where a well-established English conventional form exists, however, it should be used (e.g., Beirut, Belgrade, Brussels, Copenhagen, Damascus, Geneva, Lisbon, Milan, Prague, Rome, Tehran, The Hague, Tokyo, Turin, Vienna, Warsaw, Zurich).

The COUNTRIES data set in [UNTerm](#) is also the first stop for the names of capital cities.

For other geographical names, the NAMES data set in UNTerm should be consulted.

For names not found in either of the above sources, the reference to be consulted is the GeoNames server maintained by the United States Geospatial Intelligence Agency: <http://geonames.nga.mil/namesgaz>. It also offers the advantage of being able to search in the local script, such as Arabic or Amharic.

In a combined reference to a city and country, English usage should be followed, e.g. "Toulouse, France," not "Toulouse (France)"; "Santiago, Chile," not "Santiago de Chile".

Nomenclature of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)

In accordance with a decision of the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly at its 1560th meeting, on 18 November 1965, of which note was taken by the General Assembly at the 1398th plenary meeting, on 16 December 1965, the name to be applied to the Territory of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) in all documents issued by the United Nations Secretariat is the following:

- (a) In English, "Falkland Islands (Malvinas)";
- (b) In Spanish, "Islas Malvinas (Falkland Islands)";
- (c) In all languages other than English and Spanish, the equivalent of "Falkland Islands (Malvinas)".

This rule also applies to the translation of documents emanating from Governments and of quoted material.

Where a reference to the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) may raise or bear upon the question of sovereignty over the Territory, it should be accompanied, as the case requires, either by the standard disclaimer set forth in administrative instruction ST/AI/189/Add.25/Rev.1 of 20 January 1997 or (especially in the case of an isolated reference to the Territory) by a note or footnote reading: "A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland"

Source: ST/CS/SER.A/42 (Editorial directive prepared by Editorial Control) and INSTR/2/Rev.1 (Instructions for translators, para. 54 (ix)).

Note on Occupied Palestinian Territory

The current practice (2015) in the General Assembly is to use the term “Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem”.

This wording was decided upon by the Assembly in 1998 (decision 53/424) and has since been more or less consistently used in all General Assembly resolutions (plenary, Second Committee and Fourth Committee), although the inclusion of the word “East” became standard only from the 57th session.

All of the recurrent General Assembly resolutions employ the singular, which probably reflects an older practice: for many years the standard phrase was “territory occupied since 1967”.

In reports prepared by the Secretariat, the plural occurs frequently but there is no consistency with regard to capitalization. The preference in Editorial Control is to use lower-case initials in the plural (“occupied Palestinian territories”) (see, e.g., A/59/93, para. 39; A/59/256, title; A/59/284, para. 40).

The Security Council recently has used “territory occupied by Israel since 1967” (resolution 1544 (2004)). The Quartet has used “Palestinian areas” (see statement of the Quartet annexed to S/PRST/2002/20 and the road map (S/2003/529)).

Translators and précis-writers are therefore advised to use "**Occupied Palestinian Territory**" (initial capitals), with "**including East Jerusalem**" if it appears in the original or was specifically referred to; or "**occupied Palestinian territories**" (initial capital only for Palestinian) or "**occupied territories**" (lower case).

State of Palestine

Editorial and language staff should note in particular the Legal Counsel's guidance of 21 December 2012 that the use of the new terminology "State of Palestine" does not preclude the use of the term "Occupied Palestinian Territory". The Legal Counsel has specifically instructed the Secretariat to be guided solely by the usage of the General Assembly. On the other hand, there is no legal impediment to using the designation "Palestine" to refer to the geographical area of the Palestinian territory.

The Protocol and Liaison Service has indicated that the designation "State of Palestine" is to be used by the Secretariat in all United Nations documents.

The designation "State of Palestine" should always be used, rather than, for example, "Palestine (State of)".

In alphabetized lists, the non-member observer States, namely, the Holy See and the State of Palestine, are listed after the Member States. (See also General Assembly resolution 67/19.)

Note on numbers when referring to prison sentences

Series of numbers: figures or words?

- Always use figures for the years/months in prison sentences

The general rule in the Editorial Manual says:

When two or more numbers to which different rules apply occur in a series, the rule applying to the higher or highest number applies to all.

- Representatives from 12 African, 8 Asian and 5 Latin American countries attended the meeting.
- Only 9 of the 25 countries surveyed experienced real economic growth.

However, the Editorial Manual does not address the problem of maintaining consistency throughout an entire section or document, particularly when the document is covering legislation on prison sentences of varying lengths.

Geneva ETS revisers have therefore agreed to treat prison sentences like ages and so to use figures in all cases. Thus:

Conspiracy to commit acts of genocide shall be punishable by imprisonment for a term of 6 to 12 years, while public incitement to commit genocide shall be punishable by imprisonment for a term of 4 to 8 years.

He was sentenced to 6 months' imprisonment for ...

Punctuation issues

Bulleted lists

At times the guidance in the Editorial Manual does not fit in with the document you are translating. The guidance in the Editorial Manual is as follows:

Punctuation with bullets

When items introduced by bullets are short (equivalent to a list), no punctuation should follow the items.

In more complex constructions, especially if the items consist of whole sentences, a full stop may be used after each item.

Semicolons should not be used.

However, it is sometimes necessary to have flexibility in applying this guidance in translations. For instance, the full sentence in the third item of the list below looks odd without final punctuation:

Example 1:

The main focus was on:

- Capacity-building
- Proper allocation of resources
- The need to review user feedback. Here, it was felt further consultation was required
- Timely delivery

Using final full stops (while not incorrect) could be seen as weighing the text down unnecessarily:

Example 2:

The main focus was on:

- Capacity-building.
- Proper allocation of resources.
- The need to review user feedback. Here, it was felt further consultation was required.
- Timely delivery.

In such cases, a final semicolon -- on an exceptional basis -- would be acceptable in a translation:

Example 3:

The main focus was on:

- Capacity-building;
- Proper allocation of resources;
- The need to review user feedback. Here, it was felt further consultation was required;
- Timely delivery.

Before resorting to a semicolon, however, translators are encouraged to consider creative ways of applying the *Editorial Manual* guidance. One acceptable option for the example text would be:

Example 4:

The main focus was on:

- Capacity-building
- Proper allocation of resources
- The need to review user feedback; here, it was felt further consultation was required
- Timely delivery

The point here is to try to follow the Editorial Manual where possible but to look for alternatives when the source text requires a different approach.

Commas in restrictive and non-restrictive clauses

The presence or absence of commas in these clauses determines the meaning of the text. A reminder, then, that relative clauses can be either restrictive or non-restrictive.

In the sentence "States which are permanent members of the Security Council have a special responsibility in this area", the relative clause is a **restrictive** one, i.e. it completes and defines the subject "States".

In the sentence "The United States of America, which is a permanent member of the Security Council, has a special responsibility in this area", the relative clause is a **non-restrictive** one. The subject "the United States of America" is already complete.

Commas are used to mark off a non-restrictive relative clause from the rest of the sentence, but no commas are used to mark off a restrictive relative clause.

The distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive clauses is not an arbitrary one. Failure to observe it will often make the meaning of the sentence unclear and will sometimes distort the meaning altogether.

"States should stop nuclear tests which are harmful to the environment" (some of the tests)

"States should stop nuclear tests, which are harmful to the environment" (all of the tests)

"Staff members, who have special parking privileges, will lose them."

"Staff members who have special parking privileges will lose them."

Uncertain as to whether a relative clause is restrictive or non-restrictive? Ask the following questions:

Is the relative clause parenthetical? Can the sentence be rephrased as two statements without loss of essential meaning?

If the answer is “yes”, then you may safely conclude that the clause is non-restrictive and that commas are needed.

For example, in the sentence *"The United States of America, which is a permanent member of the Security Council, has a special responsibility in this area"*, the clause is a relative one and is parenthetical. The sentence may be rephrased as follows: *"The United States of America is a permanent member of the Security Council and has a special responsibility in this area."*

Alternatively, ask whether the sentence would still sound natural if you replace "which" with "that". If the answer is "yes", you are dealing with a restrictive clause and commas should not be used to set it off.

For example, in the sentence *"States which are permanent members of the Security Council have a special responsibility in this area"*, you could replace the "which" with "that" and the sentence would still read well. The relative clause is not parenthetical; it indicates which States are meant. The sentence cannot be split into two independent statements.

Difficult cases

There are times when the two types of relative clauses are not easily distinguished:

"His delegation had reservations concerning the draft resolution, which had been adopted by consensus." [Everybody knows which draft resolution is being referred to. The fact that it was adopted by consensus is mentioned almost incidentally.]

"His delegation had reservations concerning the draft resolution which had been adopted by consensus". [The reservations concern one of several draft resolutions. The fact that this particular reservation was the only one adopted by consensus is used as the means of distinguishing it from the others].

In this type of case, either interpretation is tenable. The context should help to remove the ambiguity.

Commas in pairs

When a non-restrictive relative clause comes in the middle of a sentence, it is marked off by a comma at each end. It is also important to use commas in pairs in other parenthetical constructions:

NOT *"The court, while preserving its independence should perform*

BUT *"The court, while preserving its independence, should perform*

NOT *"... submit to the Committee for its information, a report on*

BUT *"... submit to the Committee, for its information, a report on ..."*

NOT *"At its 42nd meeting on 18 January 1996, the Committee had decided ..."*

BUT *"At its 42nd meeting, on 18 January 1996, the Committee had decided ..."*

Commas inserted into long sentences to break them up (independent clauses)

Закон "О порядке и условиях содержания под стражей подозреваемых, обвиняемых и подсудимых"

Act on Procedures and Conditions for the Custody of Suspects, Accused Persons and Defendants

Ley contra la Explotación Sexual de las Personas Menores de Edad

Act for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation of Minors

The use of parentheses in titles of laws, a British convention that may appear “foreign” to non-British readers, should be avoided.

3. Titles accompanied by numbers and/or dates

- *Descriptive titles (with numbers and/or dates)*

Any accompanying numbers and/or dates should immediately follow the word “Act”. Thus:

Закон №.200 об изменении и дополнении Закона Республики Молдова о ...

Act No. 200 amending the ... Act

- *Shorter titles (with numbers and/or dates)*

On first reference, either of the following two styles may be applied, the choice depending in part on the order of the elements in the foreign-language title:

loi No. 042-2008/AN du 23 octobre 2008 portant statut des réfugiés au Burkina Faso

Act No. 042-2008/AN of 23 October 2008, the Refugees Act

Закон № 1202-ХІІ Республики Беларусь от 29 октября 1991 года "Об образовании"

Act No. 1202-XII of 29 October 1991, the Education Act

or:

Закон Республики Казахстан от 15 июля 2002 года N 344-ІІ О политических партиях
the Political Parties Act (No. 344-II of 15 July 2002)

Ley Indígena (Nº 19.253 de 5 de octubre de 1993)
the Indigenous Peoples Act (No. 19.253 of 5 October 1993)

Thereafter, it is usually sufficient to say “the Refugees Act”, “the Education Act”, etc., or simply “the Act”.

- *Longer titles (with numbers and/or dates)*

On first reference, the following style should be applied where possible:

loi No. 029-2008/AN du 15 mai 2008 portant lutte contre la traite des personnes et les pratiques assimilées

Act No. 029-2008/AN of 15 May 2008 on Combating Human Trafficking and Related Practices

Закон № 1545 от 25 февраля 1998 о порядке возмещения ущерба, причиненного незаконными действиями органов уголовного преследования, прокуратуры и судебных инстанций

Act No. 1545 of 25 February 1998 on the Procedure for Compensation for Damage Caused by Unlawful Actions of Criminal Prosecution Bodies, Prosecutor’s Offices and Courts

Ley de la Asignatura Medio Ambiente y los Recursos Naturales (No. 342)

Act No. 342 on the Course on the Environment and Natural Resources

Thereafter, the number and date should be omitted and it is usually sufficient to say “the Act”.

4. Titles of constitutional, federal, general, organic or framework laws

- *Constitutional laws*

On account of the special status of constitutional laws in countries that submit in Russian, the words “Constitutional Act” should appear at the beginning of the title and should be used in all subsequent references to the law concerned. Thus:

Конституционный акт "О государственной независимости Азербайджанской Республики"
Constitutional Act on the State Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan

In isolated references, however, such titles may be recast along the following lines:

the State Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan Act, one of the country’s constitutional laws

- *Federal, general, organic or framework laws*

For federal, general, organic or framework laws, the style applied will depend on the length of the title and whether it is accompanied by a number and/or a date. Thus:

Федеральный закон № 113-ФЗ «Об альтернативной гражданской службе»
Federal Act No. 113-FZ, the Alternative Civilian Service Act

Loi fédérale du 10 octobre 1997 concernant la lutte contre le blanchiment d'argent et le financement du terrorisme dans le secteur financier
Federal Act of 10 October 1997 on Combating Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism in the Financial Sector

Федеральный закон "О содержании под стражей подозреваемых и обвиняемых в совершении преступлений"
Federal Act on the Custody of Suspects and Accused Persons

Ley General de Incentivos para el Desarrollo Turístico
General Act on Tourism Development Incentives

Ley Orgánica de Servicio Civil y Carrera Administrativa
Organic Act on Public Service

Ley Marco de Autonomías y Descentralización
Framework Act on Autonomous Entities and Decentralization

Other alternatives are possible, as set out above. Note, however, that formulations such as “Federal Alternative Civilian Service Act”, where it is not clear which noun the adjective “federal” qualifies, are potentially ambiguous and should be avoided.

Laws of the People's Republic of China

The People's Republic of China is an example of a country whose statutes are uniformly referred to as “Laws”, not “Acts”, in official English documents and translations, standard reference works, and on government and non-governmental websites. The official title of a statute takes the form “[XYZ] Law of the People's Republic of China” or “Law of the People's Republic of China on [ABC]”:

中华人民共和国劳动法	Labour Law of the People's Republic of China
------------	--

中华人民共和国律师法	Law of the People's Republic of China on Lawyers
------------	--

It is not always clear which of these two forms is to be used in a given instance; translators are strongly advised to consult authoritative primary sources. When citing titles of statutes in translation, it is good practice to give the full official title at least on the first citation; if the same statute is frequently cited thereafter, a clear and consistent abbreviation can be used, e.g. “the Labour Law of the People's Republic of China”, then “the Labour Law” in subsequent citations.

In cases where no “official” English version of a statute title is available, it is preferable to paraphrase the title without capitalization, so as to indicate the unofficial nature of the translation. For example, the title 《关于深化检察改革2009-2012年工作规划》 can be rendered as “a work plan for deepening procuratorial reform for the period 2009–2012”. Finally, it should be noted that, in accordance with Chinese typographical usage, all such titles are set off in the original text with double guillemets 《》 but are not italicized when cited in United Nations documents.

References to articles, paragraphs and subparagraphs of laws and treaties

General guidance: Preferred usage is to place any subdivisions in round brackets after the article number, e.g.:

comme établi dans l’alinéa b) du paragraphe 3) de l’article 2 du Pacte —>

as stipulated in article 2 (3) (b) of the Covenant

[rather than: *as stipulated in article 2, paragraph 3 (b), of the Covenant*]

A. Example of an article with subdivided paragraphs

Article 2

1. Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to respect and to ensure ...
2. Where not already provided for by existing legislative or other measures, ...
3. Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes:
 - (a) To ensure that any person whose rights or freedoms as herein recognized ... ;
 - (b) To ensure that any person claiming such a remedy shall have his right thereto ...;
 - (c) To ensure that the competent authorities shall enforce such remedies when granted.

References to various paragraphs might read as follows:

...as stipulated in article 2 (2) and (3) (b) of the Covenant.

B. Example of an article with subparagraphs only

Article 13

Consent to be bound by a treaty expressed by an exchange of instruments constituting a treaty

The consent of States or of international organizations to be bound by a treaty constituted by instruments exchanged between them is expressed by that exchange when:

- (a) The instruments provide that their exchange shall have that effect; or
- (b) It is otherwise established that those States and those organizations or, as the case may be, those organizations were agreed that the exchange of instruments should have that effect.

References might read:

...in accordance with article 13 (a) of the 1986 Vienna Convention.

...in accordance with article 13 (a) and (b) of the 1986 Vienna Convention.

C. National legislation and non-standard originals

In references to texts other than UN treaties, conventions etc., this format may need to be adjusted depending on surrounding text or source-language specificities. Where it is not clear what numbers or letters refer to, simply follow the original, e.g.:

l'article 90-A-2 [de la Constitution] emploie l'expression ... → article 90-A-2 uses the expression...

conformément à l'alinéa f) de cet article → under subparagraph (f) of that article

en el artículo 304 A fracción XXI y B fracción IV de la Ley del Seguro Social → in articles 304 A (XXI) and 304 B (IV) of the Social Security Act

(in this case A and B are not subdivisions but separate articles)

cm.181.1¹ → art. 181.1¹

(in this case the superscripted number is not a footnote reference but an indication that the provision is an addition to the law cited)

n.(e) 4.3 cm. 159 could be rendered either of two ways:

if 4.3 refers to a numbered paragraph → article 159 (3) (c)

if 4.3 refers simply to the third (unnumbered) paragraph → article 159 (c)

D. Lists of articles

In lists of articles, the general guidance above should be followed.

Examples

The Human Rights Committee, **acting under article 5 (4)** of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, is of the view that the information before it discloses violations by the State party of **articles 6 (1), 7, 9, 10 (1), 16 and 2 (3)**, read in conjunction with **articles 6 (1), 7, 9, 10 (1) and 16 of the Covenant**, with respect to XXX ...

Articles of the Covenant: Articles 2 (3), 6 (1), 7, 9 (1–4), 10 (1)
and 16

E. References in brackets and footnotes

When a citation is given in brackets or in a footnote, words such as “article(s)”, “paragraph(s)”, “chapter(s)” and “page(s)” should be abbreviated. The title of the law or work in question should precede the reference to the specific article and paragraphs or chapter and pages being cited.

Examples

(Labour Code, art. 1 (3-5))

¹ Criminal Code, art. 32.

In longer references, i.e., if the text can be considered running text, these words should be written out in full and normal word order used.

Examples

(as stipulated in article 1 (3-5) of the Labour Code)

¹ See, for example, article 32 of the Criminal Code.

Hybrid forms such as “(art. 1, Labour Code)”, “(article 1 of the Labour Code)” or “as stipulated in the Labour Code, art. 1 (3-5)” should be avoided.

For further information, please see [Footnotes and other references](#) in the Editorial Manual Online.

References to International Labour Organization conventions

References to ILO conventions

The *authoritative source* for ILO convention titles is [NORMLEX](#). There you’ll find *short forms*:

C182 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999

C97 Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949

and *long forms*:

Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour

Convention concerning Migration for Employment (Revised 1949)

You will notice that the preamble suggests using the *short form* when citing the convention:

“... which may be cited as the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999”

“... which may be cited as the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949”

Use the short form, with the number in brackets at the end:

the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)

the ILO Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97)

For repeated references:

ILO Convention No. 182

ILO Convention No. 97

Notes:

- (a) Use the short form regardless of whether the source text uses the long or short form.
- (b) Include the year, whether or not it is in the source text.
- (c) If it is the first occurrence of ILO, spell it out (“... the International Labour Organization (ILO) Worst Forms of Child Labour ...”).

Note on Official Gazette

Official Gazette (initial caps, no italics): This translation should be used in running text regardless of the wording of the original title. In footnotes, bibliographies and other references, the title should be given in italics in the original language, together with the translation "the country's [*or* the state's] official gazette" if considered necessary.

Policy

References and authoritative sources

References should be checked to identify the provenance of your translations of:

- Titles
- Unusual terms of art, i.e. technical terms from a domain we don't deal with often
- Problematic technical/legal terms, i.e. terms you have had to hunt down yourself, or ones for which there are numerous variant translations
- Anything else that you know is correct but that might seem odd to the reader
- Reprise text
- Models

Reliability

Beware of United Nations texts reproduced on the websites of other organizations or quoted in other United Nations sources (e.g. press releases, departmental websites, etc.): they are sometimes edited or have been typed afresh and may include typos, omissions and even embellishments.

Try and find the original source document (see below) and, only if that is not possible, use another publication which is reliable.

Just because a title or a particular formulation occurs in a United Nations document, this does not necessarily mean that it is authentic: Secretariat texts themselves may not have been edited and may contain inaccuracies. If in doubt, cross-check against other sources.

With regard to reprise or models, where you have a choice, as a rule of thumb you should favour:

- UN translations over original English
- More recent over older translations (people change their minds as new information comes to light that they may not have had before)

In all cases, however, the translator's judgement as to the quality of the reprise should prevail.

1. What to check and where to look first

This is not an exhaustive list; the translation is expected to stand up to close scrutiny for accuracy, correct use of terms and compliance with United Nations house style.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Names of United Nations bodies, funds, conferences, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNTerm Portal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Names of specialized agencies and their organs, departments, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNTerm Portal Organization website
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Names of international organizations outside the United Nations system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNTerm Portal Organization website
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country names, currencies and nationality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNTerm Portal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Names of ministries, government bodies and institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dtSearch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country prov_gloss (Tradutek) Bitexts (Tradutek and other bitexts)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Names of NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNOGTerm Portal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Titles of United Nations conventions, declarations, etc., and direct, indirect and “hidden” quotations from them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human rights: UNOGTerm Portal Other: UNTerm Portal Texts: dtSearch
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers and titles of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly, Security Council, etc. Guidance on identifying them can be found in the Editorial Manual. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GA resolutions SC resolutions: http://www.un.org/en/sc/documents/resolutions/index.shtml
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Symbols and titles of documents, and direct, indirect and “hidden” quotations from them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dtSearch, Conference documents, ODS : http://ods.un.org/

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spellings of names of Secretary-General, High Commissioners, Heads of State, historical figures, members of treaty bodies, permanent representatives of Member States, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website of the body concerned Missions: “Blue book” at UNOG Protocol and Liaison service Heads of States: Protocol and Liaison service list
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dtSearch Treaty body sites via http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/HumanRightsBodies.aspx
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geographical names 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United States Geospatial Intelligence Agency GeoNames server

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelling 	<p>In this order:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UN English spelling list 2. Oxford Dictionary online
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Editorial practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Editorial Manual: http://dd.dgacm.org/editorialmanual/ • ETS section notes (dtSearch;_ETS_resources)

2. Hierarchy of authoritative sources

- Charter of the United Nations
dtSearch (type txx-space-space-charter)
- Definitive texts of negotiated agreements (*don't reproduce second-hand quotations!*)
 - Titles of human rights conventions: UNTerm Portal
 - Titles of other conventions: UNTerm Portal
 - Texts of human rights conventions: dtSearch
 - Texts of other conventions: relevant GA resolution (preferably), treaty body website (but note that the provenance and accuracy of texts on those sites is not guaranteed) or website of organization, e.g. EU
 - See also *A Compilation of International Instruments*: vol. I ([first part](#)), vol. I ([second part](#)) and the section of the second part on [humanitarian law](#) (note: sometimes also called the "Blue Book" (but not to be confused with the list of missions), it is now not complete as there are numerous more recent conventions it doesn't contain)
 - The relevant GA resolutions are the definitive point of reference for other languages and more recent instruments, and can be accessed at <http://www.un.org/documents/resga.htm>
- General Assembly and Security Council resolutions:
 - <http://www.un.org/documents/resga.htm> and <http://www.un.org/en/sc/documents/resolutions/index.shtml> respectively; guidance on identifying them can be found in the [Editorial Manual](#).
- UNTerm Portal:
 - <http://unterm.un.org/dgaacs/unterm.nsf>
- Agenda and internal documents (e.g., rules of procedure) of the body concerned (e.g. for human rights, via the OHCHR site at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/HumanRightsBodies.aspx> - go to relevant treaty body; for agenda, click on *Sessions*)
- Official sites and publications of English-speaking Governments and institutions
- United States Geospatial Intelligence Agency [GeoNames](#) server
- [The Statesman's Yearbook](#) is useful for translations of government departments and agencies where we don't already have one - but don't accept poor renderings.
- Check spelling and editorial practice (spelling out numbers, capitalization, and much much more!) at: <http://dd.dgacm.org/editorialmanual/>
- Legal terminology

- Frank Bridge’s Council of Europe (COE) Legal Dictionary is a primary reference for English/French legal terms. It can be consulted using dtSearch; entries are entitled “!00_LAW_Bridge Legal Dictionary.EF.doc”.
- Legal terms from the old United Nations Law Terminology Bulletin (TERM/PROV/40, commonly known as “Saul”) can be consulted using dtSearch.
- If the term is still not found, then consult other glossaries and dictionaries.
- Country-specific terms, e.g., names of ministries, government bodies and institutions
 - ETS provisional country glossaries (prov_gloss) in Tradutek (using dtSearch)
 - ETS bitexts in Tradutek using dtSearch
 - If there is no previous translation or if the translation is clearly poor, then simply translate it.
- Other ETS translator guidance:
 - ETS Quality Circle (FQC, RQC, SQC) recommendations in Tradutek (using dtSearch)

Errors in documents

Texts arriving from outside the United Nations (State party reports, replies to lists of issues, notes verbales)

The basic rule is to translate what is there, subject to normal editorial and translation practice. What this means is that you should quietly correct obvious editorial slips, or flag them for your contact person: this covers things such as references to resolutions and titles that are only slightly off the mark. If the original text says “The country has a population of four”, however, don’t change it or research it. Moreover, many of these texts do not use UN-approved country names or use them inconsistently. In line with editorial and translation policy at UNHQ, just translate what is there and do not attempt to impose the UN-approved version in your translation or create consistency that is not there in the original. On the other hand, if the text contains acronyms referring to a country, for example, spell out the country name.

When dealing with unclear passages in such texts, it can be helpful to see how the translators of the other language versions have tackled the problem. If their translations have not yet been released, you may wish to check the texts to make sure that any “fudges” you use don’t render your translation substantially different from theirs.

Reprise

What is reprise?

Reprise is a passage in a text that has been translated before. It should not be confused with “hidden quotes” or stock phrases.¹

¹ Hidden quotes are passages which have not been identified as quotes but in which the wording has been taken from canonical, official or agreed texts such as treaties or resolutions. Hidden quotes may also come from related background material that has already been issued in English. (One example might be the questions in a list of issues that are then reproduced in the State party’s replies to the list of issues.)

Stock phrases or formulaic sentences (also known as “boilerplate”, i.e., standardized passages used in certain kinds of documents) would include, for example, the first paragraph in most concluding observations (“The Committee

The extent to which a translator uses reprise passages will depend on the nature of the document and the context.

If the reprise comes from an entirely unrelated document, it should be used only to the extent that it is helpful.

General principle: Reprise should be used if it is helpful, but the translator is still responsible for the final version of the translation. All portions of the text, *including* reprise, need to be checked and then changed if, in the translator's judgement, changes are needed in order to correct:

Inaccuracies (mistranslations, wrong dates, incorrect names of international organizations, incorrect titles, typos, etc.)

Poor collocations, unidiomatic expressions (second-language interference)

Grammatical or editorial errors (departures from United Nations style)

Inconsistencies (within the reprise and/or between the reprise passages and the rest of the document)

Unclear or ambiguous passages

NGOs and other organizations

French/Spanish into English²

In a nutshell

- NGOs: use the English entry in UNTERM. If there is no such entry, give a translation on first occurrence, but only if you think it would help the reader.
- Translate names of educational and professional institutions.
- Do not translate names of commercial entities.

1. Non-governmental organizations

Use the English entry in **UNTERM**. Note that this entry is sometimes in the original language, e.g. Médecins sans frontières (international). If there is no such entry, follow the guidance in the Instructions for Translators (para. 65):

“The names of non-governmental bodies or organizations should be left in the original language (with a translation in parenthesis if considered helpful).”

A translation can help the reader and translators working on relay – but never introduce a translation in headings, footnotes or annexed lists.

To find a past translation

considered the report submitted by XX under article XX, at its XXth and XXth meetings, held on....”) and other similar sentences.

² The translation problems posed are somewhat different for Russianists: for Russian Quality Circle guidance on the same topic, see “NGOs, political parties and companies” (ETS resources\RESOURCES\QUALITY CIRCLES\RQC\RQC output).

- If the NGO gives an English translation of its name on its website, and if you believe it is a reasonable translation, use that. Otherwise, check past documents: prefer the *most recent in-house translation*.

Usage

Where you provide a translation on first occurrence, you will normally refer to the organization in subsequent occurrences by its original name or acronym.³

e.g. ... l'Association tunisienne du planning familial (Tunisian Family Planning Association) (ATPF). A representative of ATPF said ...

But don't be afraid to bend the rule if you feel the reader is better served by a more readily understandable short form ("A representative of the association said ...").

2. Educational institutions

Translate names of high-level educational institutions (universities, institutes, professional training colleges, etc.)

e.g. Ibero-American University, Catholic University of Chile, National Police Academy

Use generic translations (lowercase) for schools

e.g. Santa Barbara junior high school

3. Professional associations

Translate names of trade unions and professional associations

e.g. Honduran Association of Private Security and Investigation Companies

4. Commercial entities

Do not translate names of commercial entities

e.g. Banco de Bilbao, Crédit Lyonnais, UBS

5. Political parties and movements

Names of political parties and national liberation movements should not be translated unless an established English version exists. Provide a translation on first occurrence if you think it would help the reader. If there is an acronym, include it after the translation, and use the original name or acronym in subsequent occurrences. Where the name of an entity is left in the original language, it is not italicized.

³ For simplicity's sake, "acronym" is used loosely here to include abbreviations (if you can pronounce the abbreviation as a word, it's an acronym, e.g. UNICEF).

e.g. Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army) (ELN)

Translate simple descriptive names, keeping original acronym

e.g. Communist Party of France (PCF)

Don't invent English acronyms – in this case, not CPF!

In fact, *never* invent acronyms!

Translation

Standard wording

Accreditation status of national human rights institutions

The Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), formerly known as the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, accredits national human rights institutions.

There are three accreditation categories: A, B and C status.

- A status: the national human rights institution is fully compliant with the Paris Principles
- B status: the national human rights institution is partially compliant with the Paris Principles
- C status: the national human rights institution is not compliant with the Paris Principles

Use as follows:

The National Human Rights Commission was downgraded to B status.

The National Human Rights Commission was granted category A status.

The National Human Rights Commission enjoys category A status.

The National Human Rights Commission has been accredited with category A status.

Avoid using:

The National Human Rights Commission is a category A status institution.

The National Human Rights Commission is a category A institution.

Do not place single or double quotation marks around the letters A, B and C.

Do not use hyphens, italics or boldface.

Combined periodic reports

Standard phrases/subheadings to be used regardless of the original

- combined *n*th and *n*th periodic reports of X

e.g. combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of the Czech Republic

- combined initial and second to n th periodic reports of X
 e.g. combined initial and second to fourth periodic reports of the Bahamas; note that we may well find "Combined initial to fourth periodic reports of the Bahamas" – do not be led astray!
- combined n th to n th periodic reports of X
 e.g. combined fourth to seventh periodic reports of Uganda

Note that "combined" should appear systematically in running text referring to combined periodic reports, even if the word does not appear in the original for translation, as in:

Le Groupe de travail de présession a examiné les deuxième et troisième rapports périodiques d'Andorre **soumis en un seul document**.

The pre-session working group considered the **combined** second and third periodic reports of Andorra.

la Suisse a présenté **simultanément** les premier et deuxième rapports

Switzerland submitted its **combined** initial and second periodic reports

Le Comité ... a examiné le rapport initial et deuxième rapport périodique

The Committee ... considered the **combined** initial and second periodic reports

Replies to lists of issues

The **titles** of documents providing Governments' answers to questions or issues raised by the treaty bodies should generally use the words "Reply" or "Replies".

Example:

Replies of [the Government of] Ruritania to the list of issues

Reply of [the Government of] Ruritania to the list of issues

In the **body** of the document and in the headings of the **individual** replies, prefer the following usage:

"Reply to the question raised in paragraph 4

"Replies to the questions raised in paragraph 4

"Replies to the issues raised in section 3

"Reply to the issue raised in ...", etc.

or, when possible (if the questions themselves are numbered):

"Reply to question 17".

"For more information, see the reply to question 4, above."

Also, the following wording should be avoided:

"Reply to paragraph 4"

"Reply to section 7"

"Reply to page 3" etc.,

Curricula vitae (references and guidance)

1. A good source to consult on curricula vitae (or any other document dealing with academic qualifications) is the UNESCO *World Guide to Higher Education* (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0010/001027/102735eb.pdf>). This guide contains a country-by-country description of systems of higher education, together with a glossary of the principal degrees and diplomas awarded in the respective countries.
2. The primary goal of the translation of these documents is to give readers a good idea of the candidate's credentials, bearing in mind the complexity and variety of systems and institutions of education.

Qualifications

3. Some readers of the English translation may be familiar with the system under which the candidate was educated; others may not. In an effort to accommodate both groups and to minimize any distortion of meaning, the translator should leave the title of the qualification in the original language and add, in parenthesis, a translation or an approximation or circumlocution along the lines of those employed in the UNESCO *World Guide*.
4. It is important to research terms, as the same term can mean different things in different countries. In many Spanish-speaking countries, the term *bachillerato* designates a certificate of secondary education, while *licenciatura* designates the first degree of higher education. In some countries, however, such as Bolivia and Peru, the term *bachillerato* is also used to designate the first degree, and *licenciatura* a postgraduate degree. In Zaire, the *baccalauréat* is a qualification of higher education, obtained after one year's study in theology and law. On *especialización*, note this:

En algunos países las Especializaciones son títulos de posgrado. La Ley de Educación Superior de la República Argentina, por ejemplo, reconoce a las Especializaciones como un tipo de carrera de posgrado, junto con las Maestrías y Doctorados. El Egresado posee el título de "Especialista", con especificación de la profesión o campo de aplicación.

5. Use terms such as "teaching certificate", "teaching diploma", "bachelor's degree", "first degree", "master's degree", "postgraduate degree", "doctorate", "Bachelor of Laws", "Master of Laws" and "Doctor of Laws" in preference to "Cert. Ed.", "Dip. Ed.", "BA", "MA", "PhD", "LL.B.", "LL.M.", "LL.D" or other abbreviations.
6. Where transliteration is necessary, follow the United Nations (Library of Congress) system.

Academic institutions

7. Translate the names of academic institutions and their subdivisions, except where such names clearly do not lend themselves to translation. The translation should closely follow the original; if, for example, the French says *Faculté de droit*, say "Faculty of Law", not "School of Law".

Administrative and legal designations

8. The basic rules governing the translation of official titles and names are laid down in paragraphs 62 to 67 of the Instructions for Translators (see annex 1). Check the provisional glossary for the country, if one exists, and err on the side of literal translation in case of doubt. The titles of officials and courts of law should normally be translated, unless there is an issue with equivalence.

Publications

9. Follow the rules laid down in the Editorial Manual.

Decorations

10. Translate the names of decorations. The English adjective “grand” is preferable to “great” in the titles of such honours as “Grand Cross of the Order of the Sun”. The French term *cordon* and the Spanish terms *cordón* and *banda* are best translated as “sash”.

Translating footnotes

Always check the “special instructions” on the job card before translating footnotes – they may contain an instruction not to translate the footnotes (especially in UPR documents).

A cursory translation of footnotes is enough in documents that have not been edited (a footnote on the cover page will warn you) and in documents in draft form where the footnotes are for the use of treaty body members only, and will be removed from the final text, e.g. draft lists of issues (issued as CRPs – conference room papers).

A cursory translation will generally just transmit the information provided: there is no need to check the facts unless there is an obvious mistake that can be easily fixed. Here are some examples of this approach (from CCPR/C/TGO/Q/4/CRP.2, list of issues, Togo):

Original	Translation	Comments
Voir CCPR/C/TGP/4, par. 59-61.	See CCPR/C/TGP/4, paras. 59–61.	No need to check paragraph numbers are correct
2009 Human Rights Report: Togo (March 2010), Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, U.S. Department of State.	2009 Human Rights Report: Togo (March 2010), Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, U.S. Department of State.	No need to rearrange the elements into UN format or italicize the title or even to remove stops from the abbreviation (far less spell it out)
CERD/C/TGO/CO/17, p. 13.	CERD/C/TGO/CO/17, para. 13.	“p. 13” rings a small alarm bell: it takes only a few seconds to find out the document has no page 13, but does have a paragraph 13
A/HCR/13/39/Add.6, par. 97 : « En janvier 2009, le Gouvernement a indiqué que la pratique n’est plus acceptée par la population. Le taux de prévalence des mutilations	A/HCR/13/39/Add.6, para. 97: “In January 2009, ...” See also paragraph 62 of the State party’s report.	A quick check shows this document was in French only: so simply translate. No need to check para. 62 ref. or to be more specific about which “report” is

génétales au Togo est passé de 12% en 1996 à 6.9% en 2008 (rapport d'étude de Ministère de l'action sociale) ». Voir aussi, par. 62 du rapport de l'État partie.		meant. Do not check percentages even if they make no sense.
Rapport parallèle Centre CCPR, p. 6 à 8. Voir aussi, CAT/C/TGO/CO/1, par. 12; et, A/HRC/7/3/Add. 5, par. 82.	Centre CCPR, shadow report, pp. 6–8. See also CAT/C/TGO/CO/1, para. 12, and A/HRC/7/3/Add. 5, para. 82.	This is “insider information” – not much help to a reader not already acquainted with the “Centre CCPR” or its report. A poor reference in French: and so in English too. No need to check symbols or para. nos.

For further information, please see the Editorial Manual Online ([footnotes and other references](#), General instructions on footnotes and text notes, in particular the section entitled “[Points of style](#)”).

Terminology

Accession, ratification, States parties and other terms from treaty law

Definitions

Ratification, acceptance, approval and accession are procedures whereby States express their consent to be bound by a treaty.

Ratification, acceptance and approval are terms used for the final confirmation given by the signatory States to an international treaty that has been concluded by their representatives. This confirmation is indicated by the deposit of an instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval executed by the Head of State, Head of Government or Minister for Foreign Affairs. Until a signatory State has ratified, accepted or approved a treaty, the instrument does not enter into force for it.⁴

Accession is the one-step process whereby a non-signatory State may become a party to an international treaty concluded by other States; the deposit of an instrument of accession is required. Accession is generally employed by States that wish to express their consent to be bound by a treaty after the deadline for signature has passed. However, many modern multilateral treaties provide for accession even during the period in which the treaty is open for signature (and subsequent ratification, acceptance or approval).⁵

When a State signs a treaty, the signature is usually subject to ratification, acceptance or approval (*simple signature*). However, a number of multilateral treaties permit States to express their consent to be bound by signature alone (*definitive signature*).

A *State party* is a State which has consented to be bound by a treaty and for which the treaty is in force.

The *depository* of a treaty is the custodian of that instrument who accepts notifications and other documents related to the treaty, deposits them and notifies all relevant acts to the parties concerned. A depository may be a State, several States or an international organization. Over 500 multilateral treaties are deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

⁴ The corresponding French terms are *ratification, acceptation* and *approbation*.

⁵ The corresponding French term is *adhésion*.

More detailed explanations of these terms may be found in articles 2, 12, 14, 15, 18 and 77 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties and in UNTERM Portal. Translators may also wish to consult the Treaty Handbook prepared by the Office of Legal Affairs, which contains step-by-step instructions for States, as well as model instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval and accession (http://treaties.un.org/Pages/Publications.aspx?pathpub=Publication/TH/Page1_en.xml).

Disabilities - language to be avoided

Please refer to the following table when translating documents on the rights of persons with disabilities. Note that, where derogatory language is used deliberately in an original document or statement – some laws, for example, contain outmoded references to “cretins” or “feeble-minded persons” – this terminology should be reflected in the translation or retained in the summary record. Likewise, where an author or speaker expresses a preference for a particular term, that choice should be respected.

Avoid	Prefer
confined to a wheelchair, in a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound	wheelchair user
disabled persons, handicapped persons, special persons, the disabled	persons with disabilities ⁶
disabled persons' organizations	organizations of persons with disabilities, persons with disabilities and their representative organizations
Downs, Down's	Down syndrome ⁷ <i>Note that Down syndrome should be referred to as a “condition” or “genetic condition”, not as a “disease”, “illness” or “handicap”.</i>
Epileptic	person who has epilepsy
mentally handicapped, mentally defective, retarded, backward, exceptional persons	persons with intellectual AND/OR psychosocial disabilities
Mongol, Mongoloid, Downs person	person with Down syndrome
normal persons, able-bodied persons	non-disabled persons
stroke victim	stroke survivor
suffers from OR is a victim of Down syndrome	has Down syndrome
the deaf	deaf persons, people who are deaf, deaf people
Tourette's	Tourette syndrome ⁸

⁶ The term “persons with disabilities” applies to all persons who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in the face of various negative attitudes or physical obstacles, may prevent those persons from participating fully in society.

⁷ Source: Down Syndrome International.

⁸ Source: Tourette Association of America

Please also note the difference between the following terms:

Integration	Inclusion
Refers to the process of making a person adapt to or fit into society, with society itself remaining unchanged.	<p>Refers to the process of changing society to accommodate the different needs of, for example, persons with disabilities.</p> <p><i>Note that “intégration” may be translated as either “integration” or “inclusion”. In Committee documents (e.g. concluding observations), “inclusion” – the term used in the Convention – should be preferred. In State party reports, the choice will depend on the context.</i></p>

Right to a remedy and reparation

The document the [UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation](#) (see A/RES/60/147) recognizes that to remedy harms experienced by victims effectively, victims should, where appropriate, have access to five types of reparations: *restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, measures of satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition*.

Restitution is the means by which an effort is made to restore the situation as it was before the violation occurred through, inter alia, “restoration of liberty, enjoyment of human rights, identity, family life and citizenship, return to one’s place of residence, restoration of employment and return of property”.

Compensation is provided for economically assessable damage caused by violations of international human rights law which may take the form of “physical or mental harm; lost opportunities, including employment, education and social benefits; material damages and loss of earnings, including loss of earning potential; moral damage; and costs required for legal or expert assistance, medicine and medical services, and psychological and social services”.

Rehabilitation includes “medical and psychological care as well as legal and social services”.

Measures of satisfaction are intended to repair the moral damage suffered by victims and may include “effective measures aimed at the cessation of continuing violations; verification of the facts and full and public disclosure of the truth; the search for the whereabouts of the disappeared, for the identities of the children abducted and for the bodies of those killed; an official declaration or a judicial decision restoring the dignity, the reputation and the rights of the victims and of persons closely connected with the victim; [a] public apology; judicial and administrative sanctions against persons liable for the violations; commemorations and tributes; and [the] inclusion of an accurate account of the violations in training and educational materials”.

Guarantees of non-repetition include “ensuring effective civilian control of military and security forces; ensuring that all civilian and military proceedings abide by international standards; strengthening the independence of the judiciary; protecting persons in the legal, medical and health-care professions, the media and other relation professions, and human rights defenders; providing human rights and international humanitarian law education; promoting the observance of codes of conduct and ethical norms ... by public servants; promoting mechanisms for preventing and monitoring social conflicts and their resolution; and

reviewing and reforming laws contributing to...gross violations of international human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian law”.

Official titles and names

Ministers, ministries, etc.

1. When translating, use "Minister for Foreign Affairs" (not "External Relations", etc., regardless of the wording of the original); "Minister of" anything else, unless "of" would read awkwardly (e.g., "Minister for the Welfare of Women and Children"); "Ministry of ...", including "Ministry of Foreign Affairs". Note also the following: *Ministre des affaires étrangères par intérim*; Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs; *Directeur par intérim*; Acting Director; *but* Chargé d'Affaires a.i. [ad interim] (no italics in English).
 2. Note also "Ministry of Economic Affairs" (rather than "of (the) Economy" or "of National Economy") and "Ministry of the Interior" (rather than "of Internal Affairs"); the word "National" can often be omitted in the case of "Defence", "Education" and so on; the word "Public" can often be omitted in the case of "Health". Otherwise, titles and names should be translated as literally as possible.
 3. For guidance on whether or not to capitalize "ministries", see the relevant [paragraph](#) in the "capitalization" section above.
 4. In the case of English-speaking countries and countries which use English for their foreign relations, the official titles or names (e.g., Secretary (of State) for, Department of, External Affairs) must be used. The version they use on their website is considered authoritative.
 5. These same rules apply to subdivisions of ministries (divisions, bureaux, etc.) and to governmental or quasi-governmental bodies and institutions. The names of non-governmental bodies or organizations should be left in the original language (with a translation in parenthesis if considered helpful). If it is not clear whether the reference is to a public or to a private entity, retain the original. Names of private companies should not be translated. Take care, however, not to retain a name in a language other than that of the country concerned; for instance, if a treaty concluded in French, or a communication from the Romanian Mission in French, refers to a Romanian institution by a French translation of its name, retranslate into English.
-