



THE WORLD BANK  
TRANSLATION STYLE GUIDE  
ARABIC EDITION



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## Preface

As a preface to this Translation Style Guide, it is useful and appropriate to highlight the following quote from *The World Bank Publications Style Guide*, a comprehensive editorial manual on which the present guide draws much of its overall structure and English content:

For an international institution like the Bank, the best style is one that is simple, logical, and clear. The author should assume that not all readers will be native speakers of English and that many of them will be outside the Bank. Any translations are more likely to be accurate if the original text is well written.

As far back as May 1952, a similar message was conveyed in another style guide of sorts: a 20-page transcript of a talk given to staff by a former World Bank Vice-President, Sir William Iliff, under the title “Gobbledygook” – defined by the speaker as “an unpleasing, polysyllabic, often meaningless jumble; a written language that sets itself up to pass for English.”

In his talk, Sir Iliff emphasized a dozen ways to counter gobbledygook at the World Bank. In a postscript later added to the transcript in response to feedback from one of his listeners, he expounded on the same intricate link between clear English and accurate translation. This is what he wrote:

Mr. Antony Balazy has pointed this out to me: my talk complained that Gobbledygook was often unintelligible to the English-speaking reader; but I did not mention that almost impossible task that faces a translator who is asked to translate Gobbledygook into French or German or Spanish.

“Plain English,” he says, “makes the job of the translator easy.”

This is worth remembering, because much of our Bank literature, composed in English, has to be translated into other languages.

Yet, for all its importance and integral place in the communication process, translation at the World Bank has never followed a comprehensive set of guidelines similar to those defined for editorial content. The present Translation Style Guide is meant to fill this gap.

Because it is geared not just to World Bank translators (both staff and contractors) but also to anyone who handles translation in one way or another (language assistants, reviewers, requesters, project or task managers, etc.), this guide is more than a linguistic handbook. It actually consists in a series of language-specific manuals that share a common structure and use English for their core content of guidelines and explanations, providing additional rules and concrete examples in the respective languages as necessary.

Through this bilingual approach, the translation business unit of the World Bank, which developed the Translation Style Guide in collaboration with various partners and stakeholders, hopes to reach a wide-ranging, diversified audience, with one major objective in mind: to enhance consistency in the way this institution communicates in English and in other languages.



## General Guidelines

### Introduction

The variety of Arabic to be used in translations into Arabic is “Modern Standard Classical Arabic” – as used in official writings (letters, correspondence, legal texts, scientific dissertations, academic literature, etc.) and formal transactions in Arab countries. Country-specific vernaculars should be avoided in all cases, as these varieties are numerous and used exclusively in daily-life oral communication.

*Verbal* sentences (i.e., sentences starting with a verb) should be the norm *except* where the respective verb is separated by a long chain of words from the noun indicating the doer of the action or subject. In those cases, *nominal* sentences (i.e., starting with a noun) are justified as a way to avoid ambiguity and lack of clarity. For example:

*Literal* translation – word for word and transferred word order – should be avoided, as the result will not be a correct and readable text. A translated text should be a *dynamic* equivalent of the source text, meaning that it should faithfully reflect the nuances of the source text. Terminology to be used is the World Bank established terminology contained in respective databases to be made available to translators. A *good* translation is the one that meets these requirements: completeness, accuracy, consistency, and readability.

### **Note: Document Formatting**

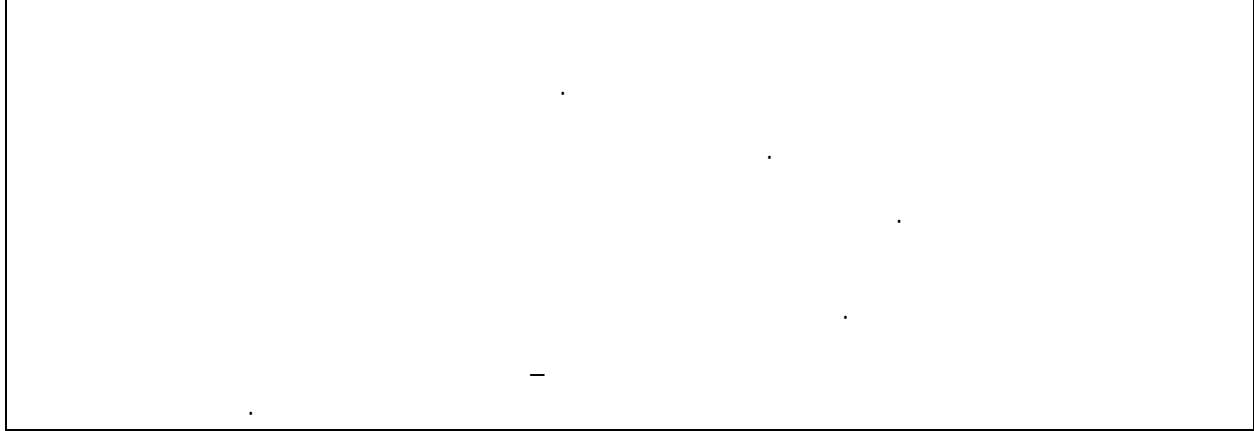
As a general rule, and unless instructed otherwise, translators of World Bank documents are expected to respect and replicate the format of the source text. One simple way to do so is to overwrite the contents of the original file (making sure to rename it in order to identify the newly saved file as the translated version).

In addition to ensuring a consistent appearance between the original document and the translation, overwriting of the source text also helps to minimize such common translation errors as the accidental omission of parts of text (for example, a sentence in the middle of a paragraph). This is not to say that translators are not free to alter the flow of sentences within a paragraph if and as warranted by stylistic considerations – for instance, by combining two sentences into one (a common practice when translating from English especially). But even in such cases, the overall content and sequence of full paragraphs must be respected, again for the sake of consistency between original and translated documents.

## Sample/Standard World Bank Text

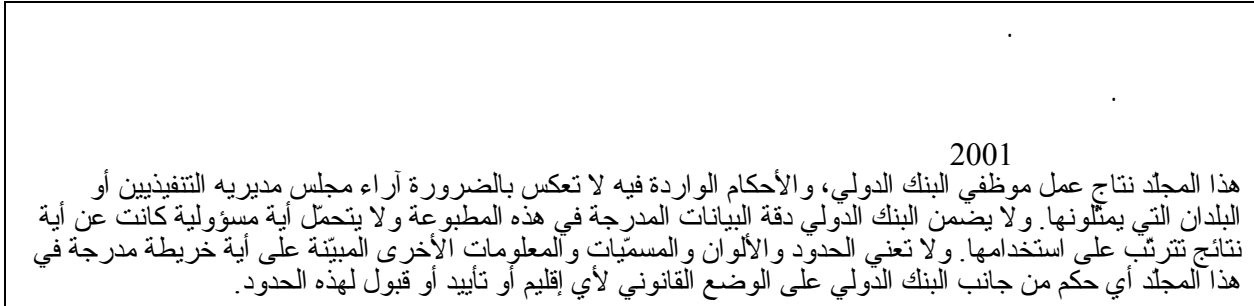
### World Bank Mission Statement

This is the text of the World Bank Mission Statement in Arabic:



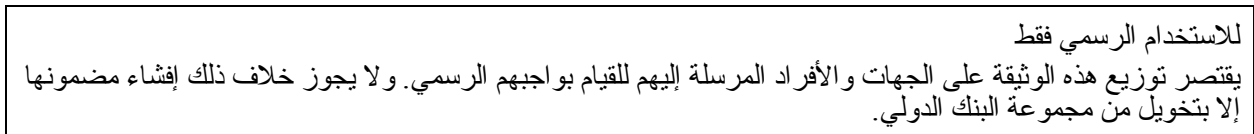
### Bank Publications

This is a sample of standard clauses on copyright pages of many publications such as the *World Development Report*:

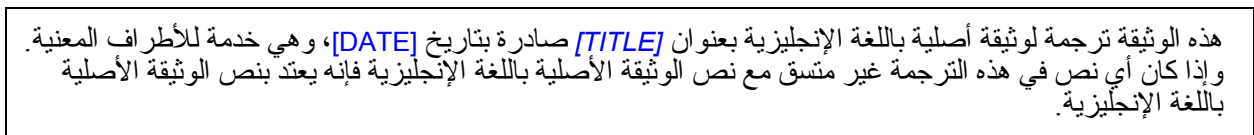


### Bank Documents

These are standard clauses on cover pages of official World Bank documents:



In the context of the Disclosure Policy, World Bank documents translated into Arabic carry the following disclaimer notice:





The contents of all project documents are standardized. Here are, for example, the standard section headings of an Implementation Completion Report:

·	·
·	·
·	·
·	·
·	·
·	·

**Letters, Correspondence**

Following is an excerpt from a standard official letter to a member country, showing the letterhead, address block, formal greeting and signature:

<b>The World Bank</b> INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION	1818 H Street N.W. Washington, D.C. 20433 U.S.A.	(202) 477-1234 Cable Address: INTBAFRAD Cable Address: INDEVAS
---	--	--

2003 أبريل 16

.....

(Cr. 3333 EGY) :

:

.....

Sam Noble



## Punctuation, Typing, Headings, Titles

### General Guidelines

Punctuation is an essential part of the writing process. Punctuation marks should be used as a mechanism for indicating stops in the flow and tone of equivalent speech stretches. The comma, for example, indicates a short stop with maintenance of tone at level two (indicating expected continuation of speech and non-relinquishing of intention to continue). By contrast, a full stop indicates end of speech stretch and lowering of tone to level one (i.e., full stop with an indication that other interlocutors may pick up at that point).

### Punctuation & Typing

#### Colon

( : )

Used for introducing a direct quote after a reporting clause. For example:

قال الرجل: هل بذلك؟ ■

Used for introducing components of an aggregate. For example:

. : ■

#### Comma

( , )

Used between short clauses or sentences with related meanings leading to a meaningful complex or compound sentence. For example:

. ■

Used for separating items comprising an aggregate. For example:

. ■

#### Dash, Hyphen

( - )

Used after an item number at the beginning of a line. For example:

- ■

Used for introducing a parenthetical clause adding information to the meaning or explaining it, but not forming an integral part of it. For example:

. - - ■

**Slash**

( / )

A new punctuation mark replacing the word "أو" . For example:

/

**Quotation Marks**

( " " )

Used for enclosing direct quotes as said by speakers. For example:

."

":

**Parentheses**

( )

Another way of enclosing a parenthetical statement that is not a part of the context of a sentence. For example:

. ( )

**Italics**

A new formatting tool used to emphasize a word or phrase in a sentence. For example:

It is also used for indicating a sub-heading. For example:

**Diacritical Marks**

It is advisable to place the stress sign " ˘ " over the respective letter, as its absence may cause ambiguity. For example:

It is also advisable to place nominative case sign " ˆ " over the respective letter, where the respective verb is a passive voice verb. For example:

## Footnotes

In Arabic, the footnote reference (also called footnote callout, preferably a number typed in superscript) must be placed at the end of the sentence (or immediately after the last word to which it refers) and after all punctuation marks with the exception of dashes. For example:

1

👉 See also [Numbers](#)

## Headings, Titles

### General Guidelines

As a general rule, the style of headings and titles (i.e., format, placement, etc.) in the translation should mirror that of the source text. (See also specific rules below regarding line breaks.)

### Consistency in Structure and Tone

Following good editorial practice, the contents of same-level heads (i.e., chapter titles, section heads, etc.) should be consistent in structure and tone. For example, if the head of one section reads **خلق المناخ** الملائم للاستثمار, following section heads will say, e.g., **الاستثمار في الفقراء** (instead of **نستثمر في الفقراء**...) and **نرصد السياسات والإجراءات** (instead of **رصد السياسات والإجراءات**...).

### Line Breaks in Titles, Subheads

As a general rule, closely related words (e.g., an adjective and the noun it modifies, or a preposition and its object) should not be separated by a break. In titles and subheads centered on multiple lines, it is good practice to use the inverted pyramid style (with each successive line shorter than the one above), *as long as* a logical grouping of words is maintained.

■ This break is awkward:

■ This title reads better:



## Acronyms, Abbreviations, Compounds

### Acronyms & Abbreviations

As a rule, Arabic does not use acronyms and abbreviations. Some abbreviations and acronyms of well-known international organizations and institutions are used in Arabic as Arabicized names. For example:

- UNESCO, (اليونسكو)
- FAO, (الفاو)
- ICARDA, (الإيكاردا)
- GATT, (الغات)

In all other cases, the Arabic full name of the respective English acronym or abbreviation should be used. For example:

- IBRD, (البنك الدولي للإنشاء والتعمير)
- IFC, (مؤسسة التمويل الدولية)
- UN, (الأمم المتحدة)

### Common Acronyms and Abbreviations

Here is a *basic* list of common World Bank acronyms and abbreviations, along with their Arabic full equivalents:

CAE	PIC
CAS	PID
EA	PPAR
EAP	PRSC
ESW	PRSP
GEF	PSAC
HIPC	PSAL
IBRD	QAG
ICR	SAC
IDA	SAL
IMF	SECAC
I-PRSP	SECAL
NGO	SSAC
OED	SSAL

**Specialized Acronyms and Abbreviations**

**World Bank Operational Manual** – Some standard abbreviations related to the Operational Manual are widely used in World Bank documents and publications. Here is the list, with corresponding definitions:

		:(OP)	■
		:(BP)	■
)		:(GP)	■
.(		:(OD)	■
	(OP, BP, GP)		
)		:(Op Memo)	■
OP, BP,		.(	
		(GP)	



## Numbers, Measurements

### General Guidelines

In text, as a general rule, spell out whole numbers **one** to **ten**, and use numerals for those above (11, 12, etc.), except in instances where both occur in the same context (a sentence, a paragraph or a group of paragraphs); then only use numerals (e.g., وثيقة استراتيجية و7 تقارير عن سير تنفيذها).

Also use numerals for: age (e.g., عمر المشروع 6 سنوات); percentages (e.g., 1 في المائة؛ 1 إلى 4 في المائة 9); (نقاط مئوية؛ 1.2 مليون وحدة حقوق سحب (e.g., 5 أونصات); amounts of money or currency (e.g., 2 مليون) (6 ملايين دولار؛ خاصة).

When a number begins a sentence, it should be spelled out (e.g., واحد وعشرون شخصا أجابوا على أسئلة الاستبيان). However, it is sometimes advisable (and possible) to edit the sentence so the number does not fall at the beginning.

### Dates

For numerical dates, Arab countries generally follow the European practice of day-month-year: e.g., 12/2/03 means 12 فبراير 2003. In text, however, dates should be spelled out (thus eliminating any ambiguity). For example:

...2003 23 ■  
.2003 ■

The preferred style for *decades* is, e.g., .

The preferred style for *fiscal years* is, e.g., 2003 .

**Note:** The World Bank Group's fiscal year starts July 1 and ends June 30, and is identified by the calendar year in which it ends – e.g., fiscal 2004 ends June 30, 2004.

### Time

Here is the preferred style for numbers expressing time:

4 ■  
9 ■  
12:30 9:30 ■  
12 ■

### Ranges of Numbers, Dates, Pages

As a general rule, ranges of numbers should be expressed with a hyphen or with an appropriate word, but not with a mix of both – i.e., if words like **من** or **بين** are used, a hyphen should never follow.

Here are some examples of this and other rules of style for number, date and page ranges:

.	7	4	■
.(1200-450 )	1200	450	■
.	( 5-4 )	5 4	■
.(2003-2000 )	2003	2000	■
.		.26-19	■

**Note:** In ranges of years, a hyphen (-) or an “en” dash (–) is used to indicate a continuous period of calendar years (as in **2002-1998** برنامج التنمية للفترة , or **2002-2000** في السنوات الثلاث). A slash (/) is used to indicate a period overlapping two calendar years or parts of one calendar year (as in /1985 برنامج 1986, or 2004/2003 السنة المالية).

## Cardinal Numbers

When spelled out, cardinal numbers **one** and **two** agree with the noun they refer to in gender; for example: قلم واحد، قلمان اثنان. Cardinal numbers **three** through **ten** take the gender opposite to that of the noun they refer to. For example:

■ ثلاثة أقلام، أربعة أقلام، خمسة أقلام، ستة أقلام، سبعة أقلام، ثمانية أقلام، تسعة أقلام، عشرة أقلام.  
 ■ ثلاث صفحات، أربع صفحات، خمس صفحات، ست صفحات، سبع صفحات، ثمان صفحات، تسع صفحات، عشر صفحات.

Numbers **11** through **19** are *compound* cardinals, formed with ten plus one through nine. In this case, the single digit number of these compound cardinals behaves exactly like their counterparts in non-compounds in respect of gender. However, the number indicating ten in such compounds agrees in gender with the noun referred to. For example:

إحدى عشرة صفحة	أحد عشر قلماً
اثنتا عشرة صفحة	اثنا عشر قلماً
ثلاث عشرة صفحة	ثلاثة عشر قلماً
أربع عشرة صفحة	أربعة عشر قلماً
خمس عشرة صفحة	خمسة عشر قلماً
ست عشرة صفحة	ستة عشر قلماً
سبع عشرة صفحة	سبعة عشر قلماً
ثمانية عشرة صفحة	ثمانية عشر قلماً
تسع عشرة صفحة	تسعة عشر قلماً

The noun following a cardinal number is also inflected as to number. After number **one**, the noun counted is singular, example: **1** قلم ; after cardinal number **two**, the noun counted is dual when spelled out but singular when the cardinal number is retained; for example: قلمان اثنان , but **2** قلم; after cardinal numbers **three** through **ten**, the noun counted is plural; for example: **3** أقلام؛ **4** أقلام؛ **5** أقلام، etc.

Between cardinal numbers **11** and **99**, the noun counted is singular in number and accusative in case; for example: **11** قلماً؛ **20** قلماً؛ **31** قلماً، etc.

Nouns after **100**, **1000** and their multiples – as well as **1,000,000** and multiples – are in the ablative case; for example: **100** رجل؛ **1000** رجل؛ **10000** رجل، etc.

## Ordinal Numbers

Ordinal numbers follow the noun counted and agree with it in number and gender. For example:

الرجل الأول؛ الرجلان الأولان؛ الرجال الأوائل؛ المرأة الأولى؛ المرأتان الأخريان؛ النساء الأخريات .

As a general rule, ordinal numbers in *text* should be spelled out. For example:

2003

## Decimals

A point is used in numbers to separate decimals, since Arabic numerals should be used instead of Hindi numerals. For example:

1503.5

0.25

## Units of Measurement

In text, all units of measurement should be spelled out—e.g., كيلومتر, كيلواط/ساعة, هكتار, طن, في المانة, طن. It is best practice to repeat the unit for all measurements when ambiguity might result. For example:

1989

15 1986

5

–

10 5

20 – 10

Also, *billion* has different meanings in American and British English: in American usage, a **billion** is equal to **1,000 million** (in British usage, it is equal to a million million); the American meaning is to be followed.

## Currency

Currency units should be spelled out and qualified as to respective country or nation. For example: 100 دولار أمريكي؛ ألف يورو؛ 7000 جنيه إسترليني؛ 1000 جنيه مصري؛ 100 ليرة سورية



## Names

### General Guidelines

Since capitalization does not apply to Arabic, one way to indicate names and headings is through bolding or the use of italics. It is advisable to use bolding for names and main headings, and italics for sub-headings. For example:

<b>World Bank</b>	البنك الدولي ■
<b>Annual Report</b>	التقرير السنوي ■
<b>James D. Wolfensohn</b>	جيمس د. وولفسون ■
<b>International Conventions</b>	اتفاقيات دولية ■
<b>Vienna Protocol</b>	بروتوكول فيينا ■

### Official Names of the World Bank Group

#### *Institutions*

The World Bank Group consists of five institutions:

■ the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	(IBRD)	■
■ the International Development Association (IDA)	(IDA)	■
■ the International Finance Corporation (IFC)	(IFC)	■
■ the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)	(MIGA)	■
■ the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)	(ICSID)	■

**Note:** The term **World Bank Group** encompasses all five institutions. The term **World Bank** refers specifically to two of the five: **IBRD** and **IDA**.

#### *Affiliates*

The World Bank hosts at its headquarters the secretariats of several closely affiliated organizations:

■ the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)	المجموعة الاستشارية للبحوث الزراعية الدولية (CGIAR)	■
---	---	---

## Names

► ARABIC

- the Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest (CGAP) (CGAP) ■
- the Development Gateway ■
- the Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest (CGAP) (GEF) ■

## World Regions, Country Names

### Official Regions

Operationally the World Bank comprises six official (or administrative) regions:

- Africa (AFR) – or Sub-Saharan Africa in IFC’s organizational structure – (AFR) ■
- East Asia and Pacific (EAP) (EAP) ■
- Europe and Central Asia (ECA) (ECA) ■
- Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) (LAC) ■
- Middle East and North Africa (MENA) (MENA) الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا ■
- South Asia (SAR) (SA) جنوب آسيا ■

### Other Geographic Areas

These are some standard regions (organized by continent):

- Central Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa ■
- Central America, Latin America, North America, South America أمريكا الوسطى، أمريكا اللاتينية، أمريكا الشمالية، أمريكا الجنوبية ■
- South Central Asia, Southeast Asia, Southwest Asia, Western Asia ■
- Central Europe, Eastern Europe, Northern Europe, South-Eastern Europe, Southern Europe, Western Europe ■

### Country Classifications

The World Bank’s main country classification is based on gross national income (GNI) per capita and yields the following categories:

- low-income economies (or low-income countries, LIC) ■ البلدان المنخفضة الدخل (LIC)
- middle-income economies (or middle-income countries, MIC), subdivided into lower-middle-income and upper-middle-income economies ■ البلدان المتوسطة الدخل (MIC)، وهي شريحتان: الشريحة الدنيا من البلدان المتوسطة الدخل والشريحة العليا من البلدان المتوسطة الدخل
- high-income economies ■ البلدان المرتفعة الدخل

Other standard expressions have been or are still used to differentiate countries and their level of development. These are the principal or more common ones:

- by indebtedness (part of the World Bank's standard classification): severely indebted countries; moderately indebted countries; less indebted countries ■ حسب المديونية (في إطار التصنيف المعياري في البنك الدولي): البلدان شديدة المديونية؛ البلدان معتدلة المديونية؛ البلدان الأقل مديونية
- further classified as: severely indebted low-income countries (SILIC); severely indebted lower-middle income countries (SILMIC); severely indebted middle-income countries (SIMIC); moderately indebted low-income countries (MILIC); moderately indebted middle-income countries (MIMIC); less indebted low-income countries (LILIC); less indebted middle-income countries (LIMIC) ■ مزيد من التصنيفات: البلدان المنخفضة الدخل شديدة المديونية (SILIC)؛ بلدان شديدة المديونية من الشريحة الدنيا من البلدان متوسطة الدخل (SILMIC)؛ بلدان متوسطة الدخل شديدة المديونية (SIMIC)؛ بلدان منخفضة الدخل معتدلة المديونية (MILIC)؛ بلدان متوسطة الدخل معتدلة المديونية (MIMIC)؛ بلدان منخفضة الدخل أقل مديونية (LILIC)؛ بلدان متوسطة الدخل أقل مديونية (LIMIC)
- also: heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC); low-income countries under stress (LICUS) ■ أيضا: بلدان فقيرة مثقلة بالديون (HIPC)؛ بلدان منخفضة الدخل تعاني من ضغوط (LICUS)
- developing countries; high-income developing economies; least developed countries ■ بلدان نامية؛ بلدان نامية مرتفعة الدخل؛ أقل البلدان نموا
- developed countries (also referred to as industrial countries or as industrially advanced countries); developed market economies ■ بلدان متقدمة (أيضا تسمى البلدان الصناعية أو البلدان المتقدمة صناعيا)؛ اقتصادات السوق المتقدمة.

## Official Country Names

For an official World Bank list of country names in English, click on [this link](#). For official country names in other languages, the best source is the United Nations Multilingual Terminology Database – UNTERM ([unterm.un.org/](http://unterm.un.org/)), which contains 70,000 entries (country names and other terminological data) in the six official languages of the UN System.

**Note:** References to Hong Kong and Taiwan must conform to the following style: **Hong Kong, China** – alternately, **Hong Kong (China)**; **Taiwan, China** – alternately, **Taiwan (China)**.

:  
:  
- ( )  
- ( ) .

## Other Official Names

### *International Agreements*

As a specialized agency of the United Nations, the World Bank operates to a certain extent in the context of international agreements and conventions, to which much of its documentation regularly makes reference. These are the official names that come up most often:

- Millennium Development Goals (MDG) (MDG) ■
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CBD) ■
- (Stockholm) Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (CPOP) (CPOP) ( ) ■
- United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (UNCLOS) ■
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa) (UNCCD) ( / (UNCCD) ■
- Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) (FCCC) ■
- Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, and Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer ■

🔗 See also [Acronyms](#)