

$$f(x) = \begin{cases} -1 & \text{if } x < 0, & (1a) \\ 0 & \text{if } x = 0, & (*) \\ 1 & \text{if } x > 0. & (1b) \end{cases}$$

Reference to a subequation (1b) and to the overall equation (1) are possible.