

GEOGRAPHY

<p>Paper 9696/11 Core Physical Geography</p>
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Key messages

The most important key message is that candidates need to read the questions very carefully especially the essay questions in **Section B**. Candidates will recognise key words, issues and concepts that they are familiar with, but the context might be different. Such questions also need to be carefully interpreted to identify the form the evaluation takes as there is always an evaluative element in the 15-mark essay questions. In this paper, **Questions 4(c) and 6(c)** required an assessment of a statement in the form of a quote and **Question 5(c)** was an assessment of the extent to which, in this case, global warming was a result of human activity. The structure of the answer and the way evaluation is provided will vary. The other main point is that it is very difficult to evaluate such questions without the use of relevant examples to justify the arguments provided. This point is being stressed because it is clear that in many instances, knowledge and understanding are clear but that the knowledge has not been used efficiently in any subsequent evaluation.

General comments

Candidates generally displayed a good understanding of the relevant geographical concepts. Most seemed well prepared for the examination and the quality of many of the answers was very good. Many answers were thoughtful and logical with an impressive level of detail, though care must always be taken to ensure it is relevant to the question.

There were very few rubric errors in the way of answering too many or too few questions, but care should be taken in the correct numbering of questions. Planning in terms of time allocation was generally effective.

There are still several issues that keep recurring and usually relate to inaccurate understanding of basic concepts and terminology. Such instances are misinterpreting erosion and weathering, surface wash for mass movement and hard and soft rocks rather than referring to resistant and less resistant rock. In this context limestone is not a soft rock. It might be susceptible to chemical weathering, but it can rarely be described as a soft rock which is a physical characteristic. Candidates should be careful with the use of geographical examples. Simply referring to a country or a general region with no specific name or location is rarely useful. However, there were many excellent detailed examples. Geography and examples are always changing and many of the examples were so recent that it was obvious that candidates were keeping up to date with developments.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Hydrology and fluvial geomorphology

Question 1

- (a) (i) Most candidates answered this correctly, but it should be noted that units of measurement were also required to get the mark.
- (ii) The majority of candidates were able to correctly calculate the lag time but there were also many candidates who did not understand what lag time was.

- (b) The question asked for a description of the shape of the hydrograph which required a general description of rising and falling limbs and peak discharge. A stage-by-stage description was not sufficient.
- (c) This question was generally answered quite well with good marks being achieved. The two main reasons discussed were climatic changes, especially changes in precipitation, and land use changes, usually urbanisation. Change over time could be from months to years. The question asked for explanation, so simply stating that increased precipitation led to increased discharge received few marks. Also, the question asked for changes to the shape of a hydrograph. This was often ignored with answers simply stating increased discharge.

Atmosphere and weather

Question 2

- (a) Most candidates were able to obtain some marks, although the level of detail was often vague.
- (b) This caused few problems with natural and human factors offered as reasons. Anthropogenic heat and low temperatures at the top of the mountain were most frequently discussed. The lack of snow on the trees caused some confusion.
- (c) This question was answered well with many candidates being awarded full marks.

Rocks and weathering

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates interpreted the question correctly and simply identified four relevant factors from the written extract. Some candidates spent too long in lengthy descriptions and interpretation of the factors mentioned. This was a good example of not interpreting the command word correctly.
- (b) This question was answered well with a good understanding of the role of water as a cause of mass movement.
- (c) This question was also answered well, although there was sometimes a difficulty in describing how pinning and netting helped reduce mass movement. With afforestation this is where the confusion between slope wash and mass movement occurred. Some candidates referred to trees as helping reduce surface slope wash rather than mass movement.

Section B

Hydrology and fluvial geomorphology

Question 4

- (a) (i) Many candidates knew that laminar flow was smooth with no eddies and some knew that it moved in the form of sheets. But few candidates noted both points. Most candidates knew that thalweg referred to the maximum velocity flow, but many described it as the point of maximum flow or the part with maximum flow and not the line of maximum flow. Only a very few referred to the deepest part of the river channel.
- (ii) This question was not answered well and many candidates described the formation of deltas.
- (b) Overall, this question was not well answered. It was clear from diagrams that some candidates knew the nature of the curve and what it represented. However, many candidates ignored it and simply explained how rates of deposition and erosion varied in a river channel. This often led to detailed accounts, which were quite often inaccurate, especially as to how velocity varies, of the upper, middle and lower portions of rivers. It is also unfortunate that the curve refers to erosion when it is really entrainment of specific material. This leads many candidates to write in detail about the various erosion processes.
- (c) In contrast to the previous question, this question was answered well with many extremely detailed answers. Although urbanisation and deforestation were the main land-use changes discussed,



there were detailed discussions of other land-use changes such as various types of agriculture. With reference to the earlier discussion of techniques of evaluation, most candidates realised that in order to assess the question, they needed to discuss changes that might lead to decreases in channel flow as well. They could have reversed the argument and referred to afforestation rather than deforestation, but many discussed aspects such as the building of dams and water abstraction in general, whether for irrigation or for general water supply, and this was a good response.

Atmosphere and weather

Question 5

- (a) (i) Definitions of reflected solar radiation were mostly adequate but few candidates understood latent heat transfer.
- (ii) Answers were generally sound with many candidates being able to refer to the differences in specific heat capacity and relate this to seasonal variation in temperature.
- (b) There was a good response to this question. However, a relatively large number of candidates still refer to the equator as being closer to the sun. Most of the factors noted in the mark scheme were present in the answers.
- (c) Answers to this question were weak. Most candidates knew that it had something to do with greenhouse gases and the burning of fossil fuels, but a sizeable number were unable to identify a greenhouse gas or discuss how global warming occurred. Too many candidates thought that the urban heat island was the main cause of global warming and that holes in the ozone layer were also involved. Only a few candidates were able to argue for a natural cause of global warming.

Rocks and weathering

Question 6

- (a) (i) Most candidates were able to describe some accurate differences between the plates. There was some confusion between density and weight. The difference in material composition was only mentioned by a few candidates.
- (ii) This question was answered well, often with accurate and informative diagrams. Maximum marks were quite often awarded.
- (b) Most candidates were able to offer some reasoned explanation of the role of temperature in affecting the type and rate of weathering. As has been the case in the past for questions such as this, rate of weathering was often ignored. The emphasis was usually on physical weathering with freeze–thaw and insolation weathering being the most frequently discussed followed by salt crystallisation, although the mechanism of the last was often discussed in very vague terms. Most candidates realised that chemical weathering was often enhanced by warmer conditions, but the precise mechanisms were unclear.
- (c) Many candidates were able to discuss in general terms how the nature of tectonic plate boundaries determined the resulting tectonic landforms, but answers varied considerably in detail and accuracy. There was often a confusion over deep sea trenches and the difference between destructive convergent boundaries and collision boundaries. Discussion of hot spots also caused confusion in some instances. Diagrams were often produced but in many cases were inaccurate and simply highlighted misunderstanding of the processes and landforms involved. However, there were many excellent answers which covered all four types of plate boundaries with accurate description and evaluation of the tectonic landforms associated with them.

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Key messages

A variety of data was presented in **Section A** and this included two sets of maps and a photograph. The map that went with **Question 2(a)** and **(b)** was straightforward and caused few problems, but candidates were less secure with the maps for **Question 1(b)** and **(c)**. These maps showed varying groundwater levels in southern India at two specific times of the year, and many of the candidates misinterpreted the key thinking that the bigger the number, the closer to the surface the ground water table was, not the deeper it was. Although candidates are unlikely to have seen this particular map before, the skill of interpreting a key to understand the data is a requirement of the course. **Question 3(a)** was a photograph interpretation question with part **(b)** requiring a diagram and description of the weathering process shown in part **(a)**. Candidates need to read the command words in the question carefully as many did not provide a diagram with their description.

There was good use of labelled diagrams in some questions. **Question 4(b)** was particularly impressive with many clear and accurate diagrams to explain the formation of waterfalls and oxbow lakes. However, diagrams in **Question 5(b)** would have been equally as useful.

The use of examples continues to be a key element, particularly in **Section B**. Examples need to include relevant detail to be effective and not just a place name. **Question 4(c)**, **5(c)** and **6(c)** required specific reference to examples in their response.

In **Section B** all the essay questions (**Question 4(c)**, **5(c)** and **6(c)**) require evaluation or assessment to reach Levels 3 and 4. This is a crucial part of the answer but needs emphasising. Although many understand what is required, this essential element is often addressed at the end of the examination when time is limited. The most successful answers are often those which incorporate evaluative considerations into the main discussion of the essay.

General comments

Candidates generally displayed a good understanding of the relevant geographical concepts. Most seemed well prepared for the examination and the quality of many of the answers was very good. Many answers were thoughtful and logical with an impressive level of detail, though care must always be taken to ensure it is relevant to the question.

There were very few rubric errors in the way of answering too many or too few questions, but care should be taken in the correct numbering of questions. Planning in terms of time allocation was generally effective, though as stated above, the evaluation aspect of essay questions needed more emphasis in some instances.

The concept of 'pattern' continues to cause difficulties. There is a tendency to simply locate areas, such as in **Question 2(b)**, where the distribution of climate-related impacts of global warming needed to be looked at across the world as a whole, not continent by continent.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Hydrology and fluvial geomorphology

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates answered this correctly, but it should be noted that units of measurement were also required to get the mark.
- (b) As referenced to in key messages, this question caused the greatest problems. Candidates struggled to interpret the key correctly which clearly states that the figures are in metres below ground level. Many candidates thought that Fig. 1.1 had ground water that was closer to the surface than in Fig. 1.2 because the number from the key was larger.
- (c) Many candidates were able to give reasons why the ground water table was higher in Fig. 1.2 than Fig. 1.1 but did not consider the time scale between the two maps. So suggesting that afforestation or urbanisation were reasons for a rise in ground water over just an 8-month period are very unlikely. Better responses focused on why the ground water table was lower in Fig. 1.1, linking it to climate conditions and likely associated land-use.

Atmosphere and weather

Question 2

- (a) (i) Most candidates answered this correctly, though some gave a number instead of a word.
(ii) Most candidates answered this correctly.
- (b) As referenced in general comments, some candidates gave a description of location rather than pattern, so simply took a continent-by-continent approach. Better responses took an overall view and cited where the greatest number of climate-related impacts were concentrated (with reference to the tropics and equator) and then described the distribution away from these areas.
- (c) Most candidates scored some marks on this question but tended to just focus on one reason, usually latitude. There were 5 marks available for this question, so candidates needed to consider a variety of reasons to access full marks.

Rocks and weathering

Question 3

- (a) Some candidates answered 'physical weathering' without specifying the particular type i.e. freeze–thaw. Many incorrectly identified it as exfoliation or insolation weathering.
- (b) Many candidates scored full marks on this question because they correctly described the process of freeze–thaw with a relevant diagram. Weaker responses did not provide a diagram which was required by the question and therefore limited the mark range they had access to.
- (c) There were many good responses to this question, often with reference to Peltier's diagram, and considered how rainfall affected both physical and chemical weathering with exemplification. The question asked for comment on both type and rate of weathering, so for full marks to be awarded, candidates had to make some comment on rate of weathering as well.

Section B

Hydrology and fluvial geomorphology

Question 4

- (a) (i) Answered well by many candidates with enough detail given in each definition to gain full marks.
(ii) This question proved difficult for candidates, and many completely omitted it. It is a relatively straightforward calculation, but many candidates did not state it is the total length of all streams and rivers.
- (b) This question was answered particularly well. There was clear description of how the features were formed, often with exemplification and well-drawn labelled diagrams. Where errors occurred, they

tended to be centred around misconceptions on the juxtaposition of different hardness of rock strata and erosional processes in waterfalls.

- (c) This was generally well answered. Candidates were able to give many examples of hard and soft engineering on rivers, but weaker candidates just described the two types of engineering. To get into Level 3 and 4, candidates had to evaluate which is the most effective and explain why.

Atmosphere and weather

Question 5

- (a) (i) This question was answered very well by most candidates with clear comment on what affects high and low albedo rates.
- (ii) Most candidates wrote about clouds as being the way incoming (shortwave) radiation was reflected, which was perfectly acceptable, and they scored well on this question.
- (b) Candidates produced some impressive answers to this question. They were able to clearly explain the three main causes of precipitation – convectional, orographic and frontal, and the better responses also went on to consider radiation cooling. This was a question where diagrams would also have improved the clarity of the response.
- (c) This was a more challenging question. Candidates needed to have a clear understanding of what the global energy budget is, to answer this well, and some got it confused with diurnal energy budgets. Although absorption, reflection, scattering and re-radiation all affect incoming solar radiation and therefore the global energy budget, better responses also discussed other factors like the latitudinal pattern of radiation (excesses and deficits) and atmospheric transfers through wind belts and ocean currents, to widen their evaluation.

Rocks and weathering

Question 6

- (a) (i) This question was answered well by most candidates, though some detail was needed on both plate boundaries to score full marks. For example, saying a destructive plate boundary was where two plates move towards each other needed further detail, such as the denser oceanic plate subducts under the less dense continental plate, to get full marks.
- (ii) A diagram would have helped the explanation for this question. Candidates struggled to accurately explain the location of an ocean trench, beyond saying it occurred where one plate subducts under another. However, it was good to see that many candidates were able to name an ocean trench.
- (b) There were two features to be discussed in this question – the movement of water and the movement of sediment – but for both of them it was only across the surface of slopes, so discussion on landslides and rock falls was not relevant. There were some very detailed responses discussing rainsplash and surface runoff, with good use of diagrams to further clarify the detail and then linking the movement of water to the movement of sediment across the surface. For full credit to be given candidates did have to show understanding that surface runoff has two distinct features – that of unconcentrated sheetwash and rill development. It was particularly impressive when place specific examples were also given.
- (c) Many candidates were able to discuss a range of ways to reduce mass movement and Hong Kong was by far the most popular area considered. However, many responses just described the different methods and paid little attention to the command word of ‘evaluate’. To access Levels 3 and 4, candidates needed to not only discuss and explain the various methods, but also compare and contrast them, and come to some conclusion as to which was the best. An indicator of a high-level response was acknowledging that ‘the best’ may vary in different climates, geology and level of development in a country.

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Key messages

A variety of data was presented in **Section A** and this included photographs, maps and a diagram. The diagram in **Question 3** was straightforward and caused few problems, but candidates were less secure with interpreting the precipitation map and linking it to the relief map of Alaska in **Question 2**. Candidates could identify areas of highest precipitation, but descriptions of patterns and general locations lacked clarity. Some candidates ignored the relief map altogether which limited their response in **Question 2(c)** in particular. The photograph interpretation in **Question 1** was generally done well but several candidates did not read the titles of the photographs carefully enough and presumed Fig. 1.2 was before the flood event not after, leading to errors in their interpretation of events.

The use of illustrative diagrams continues to be variable. There were several questions where a well labelled diagram would have provided clarity and detail, such as **Question 3(c)** with types of slope protection.

The use of examples continues to be a key element, particularly in **Section B**. Examples need to include relevant detail to be effective and not just a place name. **Question 4(c)**, **5(c)** and **6(c)** required specific reference to examples in their response.

In **Section B** all the essay questions (**Question 4(c)**, **5(c)** and **6(c)**) require evaluation or assessment to reach Levels 3 and 4. This is a crucial part of the answer but needs emphasising. Although many understand what is required, this essential element is often addressed at the end of the examination when time is limited. The most successful answers are often those which incorporate evaluative considerations into the main discussion of the essay.

General comments

Candidates generally displayed a good understanding of the relevant geographical concepts. Most seemed well prepared for the examination and the quality of many of the answers was very good. Many answers were thoughtful and logical with an impressive level of detail, though care must always be taken to ensure it is relevant to the question.

There were very few rubric errors in the way of answering too many or too few questions, but care should be taken in the correct numbering of questions. Planning in terms of time allocation was generally effective, though as stated above, the evaluation aspect of essay questions needed more emphasis in some instances.

The concept of 'pattern' continues to cause difficulties. There is a tendency to simply locate areas, such as in **Question 2(b)**, where the distribution of precipitation needed to be looked at across Alaska as a whole, not just described around the state. Reference to the relief shown in Fig. 2.2 would have helped with this.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Hydrology and fluvial geomorphology

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates correctly identified the landform as being a floodplain, though a few regarded X as being a precise location rather than a general location and identified the feature as a levee.
- (b) Some candidates described the changes to the river valley and floodplain rather than the changes to the river itself, so attention needs to be paid to the wording of the question. This question carried 4 marks which is an indicator of the detail that was needed. Simply stating one change limits the possibility of scoring full marks.
- (c) There were some good answers to this question. Candidates had to be able to identify the river channel features shown in Fig. 1.2 and then use their knowledge of river processes to suggest how these features would change over time. For example, meanders are present in the photograph so further discussion on meander migration, and formation of oxbow lakes was creditworthy.

Atmosphere and weather

Question 2

- (a) The dark blue colour on the map where X was, related to 6–13 mm in the key, and this is what should have been quoted in the answer. Some candidates had a 'guess' at a figure somewhere in this range, which whilst creditworthy was not necessary to get the mark. However, it was necessary to quote the units of measurement.
- (b) As referenced in general comments the concept of pattern continues to be difficult for many of the candidates. Many responses just described the distribution of precipitation saying where the wettest areas were, where the driest areas were, but not linking any pattern into their response. Simple sentences like precipitation decreases dramatically from south to north of the map would have been a good starting point.
- (c) There was much that was creditworthy in responses here, but to score well candidates had to refer to the topographical detail shown in Fig. 2.2 and relate this to the precipitation figures. Comments on relief/orographic rainfall and rain shadow effect were all relevant here. Better responses also made reference to northern Alaska being under the descending limb of the Polar cell with cold, dry sinking air reducing precipitation.

Rocks and weathering

Question 3

- (a) (i) Most candidates were able to read the information off the diagram correctly, though care should be taken to use the exact words that are on the diagram and not paraphrase it.
- (ii) Nearly all candidates were able to identify the slowest movement.
- (b) When candidates used the information given on the axes in the diagram, they were able to identify differences very easily.
- (c) Many candidates were able to score well on this question. They knew an impressive range of strategies to modify slopes, often with good exemplification, but to score full marks they had to not only describe the strategy but also explain how it helped reduce mass movement.

Section B

Hydrology and fluvial geomorphology

Question 4

- (a) (i) Candidates generally did well in considering different rock types, though too many candidates are still using words like hard and soft, when they mean permeable and impermeable. However, some candidates did not link the rock type to the shape of the hydrograph using any specific vocabulary. Lag time, steeply rising limbs, flashy responses are examples of the terminology that should have been used.

- (ii) Candidates frequently struggle with the concept of recurrence interval, and this question posed difficulties for many. Responses were vague, often consisting of little more than comments about how often a river floods.
- (b) This was a straightforward question, requiring an explanation of the erosional processes involved in the formation of waterfalls and gorges. There were some excellent responses with detailed diagrams that did just this. Others needed to do more than simply describe the changes.
- (c) Candidates produced some very good responses to this question. Different types of flood defences were well understood, and comparisons were made between the effectiveness of hard and soft engineering methods. Most responses were illustrated with relevant examples.

Atmosphere and weather

Question 5

Too few candidates answered this question to be able to give meaningful comments in this report.

Rocks and weathering

Question 6

Too few candidates answered this question to be able to give meaningful comments in this report.



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Key messages

- Candidates should read the questions thoroughly, considering each word before answering the question. Candidates who missed key command words gave less effective responses, especially in **Section B**. The term 'pattern' seems to be poorly understood.
- Teachers are encouraged to use up to date and relevant examples and case studies to support students' learning. Where the question asks for examples, these are required for candidates to access the higher levels, and should be relevant and appropriate. They should be more detailed than simply the name of a country. Examples are often helpful in developing detail or clarifying a point even if not specifically mentioned in the question too. Case studies should include accurate facts and be relatively recent, preferably within the lifetime of the candidates, and should be applied to the question by selecting relevant information. Responses which detail all parts of a well-learned case study often lack focus.
- The mark allocation not only indicates the range of points expected but also the time that should be spent on that section. The 15 mark part (c) in **Section B** is worth 25 per cent of the total marks, paper whereas the part (c) in section A is usually worth 10 per cent or less. The time spent on these two parts should reflect their share of the marks. Many candidates wrote at length producing a side of material for a maximum 2 marks in **Section A**. Overall **Section A** and **B** carry equal marks so candidates should spend equal amounts of time on them.

General comments

- **Section A** answers tended to be stronger than **Section B** answers, possibly due to candidates not fully appreciating what was demanded by the questions in some parts of **Section B**. Typically **Question 4(c)** and **Question 5(b)** were not fully understood by a number of candidates. Many responses were weak on the part (b) questions of **Section B**, often writing very little for the 8 marks available.
- Some responses gave four or more ideas when only two were required in **Questions 2(b)** and **3(b)**. This is unnecessary and often wastes time.
- Candidates should avoid using generalised terms such as infrastructure, technology and resources without any clarification of what they mean or include, such as the use of 'amenities' or 'facilities' in **Question 2(c)**.
- Part (c) questions in **Section B** always require assessment or evaluation. Candidates should be aware that this requires a balanced consideration of different aspects of an issue. Many weaker responses either have no concluding remarks or simply end their answer with a simple sentence stating that they agree with or disagree with a statement.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Population

Question 1

- (a) (i) Most candidates correctly identified Brazil.
- (ii) Most candidates correctly calculated the answer. Weaker responses did not show their working or made errors in working the data.
- (b) While candidates recognised the broad contrast between Italy's ageing population and Laos' youthful population, many responses lacked comparative depth. Instead of a direct comparison, answers often became descriptive commentaries on each country's bar chart separately. Few candidates identified the similarity in the proportion of the working population. Better responses stayed focused on the information shown in the chart and used data to support points. Weaker responses gave two separate lists which is not a comparison.
- (c) This question was answered effectively by most candidates.

Migration/Settlement dynamics

Question 2

- (a) Most candidates recognised a range of patterns such as: *'5 of the 10 countries are in South America, near to Brazil, and 3 from Europe. Japan is an anomaly being the only source of migrants from Asia.'* Weaker responses struggled with the idea of pattern so tended to list countries by the number of migrants.
- (b) Most responses offered two relevant differences either in terms of characteristics: *'Migrants from HICs tend to be older and better educated compared to those from LICs who are often younger with limited education.'* Or in terms of their motivations to migrate: *'Migrants from HICs tend to be economic migrants looking for better jobs or higher wages whilst those from LICs are often forced migrants fleeing from a war or natural disaster.'*
- Weaker responses did not complete the full comparison to compare like with like, such as: *'Migrants from HICs are wealthier whilst migrants from LICs are usually single males looking for work.'* Often weaker responses gave more than two characteristics, which was not necessary. Some responses assumed this question was based on Brazil, however questions with letters are independent of each other unless a link is indicated. Some responses included dubious stereotypes, which were not credited.
- (c) This was answered well by most candidates with a wide range of 'pulls' for migrants linked to major cities. Weaker responses did not explain why that feature attracted migrants to the city for example: *'Major cities have a cultural mix which attracts migrants.'* A better response was: *'Major cities have varied cultures so the migrant can find cultural aspects that support their lifestyle such as familiar food, language and religious beliefs which attract them to the city.'*

Population/Migration/Settlement dynamics

Question 3

- (a) The most effective responses compared all three settlements together, such as: *'Both settlements A and B increased in population 2001 to 2021 but settlement C declined (by about 50) over the same period but remained as the largest population of the three settlements.'* Weaker responses tended to list the changes separately, which is not a comparison.
- (b) The strongest responses made the cause/effect clear: *'With greater technology people can work from home so many moved out of the urban area to live in nearby villages, with a more attractive way of life, rather than commute or live in the city.'*
- Some weaker responses gave reasons more appropriate for suburban or urban areas. Other responses gave lengthy answers with a range of reasons, which wasted time. Other weaker responses gave limited answers that didn't explain the link to the increase in population.
- (c) This was generally well answered with a range of both push factors from rural settlements and pull factors to distant urban areas. Again, the key was the cause/effect link to the decline in population: *'As many young people have left the village to find work or higher education the village population is ageing with a low birth rate and increased death rate so the total population declines.'*

Section B

Population

Question 4

- (a) (i) This was clearly a well understood concept. Nearly all candidates recognised that it occurs when the population exceeds the areas carrying capacity (resource base). Stronger responses went on to consider the resulting environmental degradation and/or the falling quality of life.
- (ii) Most responses recognised the dynamic nature of both population (via natural increase and net migration) and resources such that optimum population is constantly changing. Few candidates considered the theoretical nature of this concept. Some weaker responses seemed to consider it was the government's role to achieve optimum population, referring to the control of birth and death rates.
- (b) Relatively few responses offered more than the very basic difficulties caused by underpopulation with many responses confusing underpopulation with either a declining or ageing population.
- (c) Most responses agreed that decreasing birth rates cause economic decline linking this to the shortage of labour and limited demand for goods and services. Some stronger responses suggested it could lead to economic growth often citing Japan as an example. A number of candidates used China's population policy and suggested it had led to economic growth as there were fewer mouths to feed and support. Weaker responses tended to link this question to the Demographic Transition Model.

Migration

Question 5

- (a) The vast majority of candidates clearly understood the term explaining the lack of choice and linking this to one or more causes. Forced and voluntary migration were sometimes confused, especially when describing economic migration as 'forced'. Migration related to natural hazards was occasionally included without clear justification or link to international movement.
- (b) Many responses did not consider the 'increased in recent years' part of the question. Some missed that this was international migration and wrote about internal migration. Stronger responses recognised a number of driving forces operating today, including developments in transport and communication. Discussion of globalisation was frequent but lacked sufficient development or exemplification.
- (c) Responses looked at this as management by both the source and destination/receiving area governments. Few candidates seemed to be aware of the range of possible actions by governments, both negative and positive. Stronger responses offered some sound evaluation such as: *'The government's ability to manage international migration varies with the volume of migrants, the timing of their arrival and the financial capacity of the government.'* A clear contrast was often drawn between the capacity of HICs and LICs to manage migration, with stronger answers referencing specific measures used by developed nations.

Settlement dynamics

Question 6

Responses tended to focus on transport often basing it on London (UK) or Curitiba (Brazil). Weaker responses often confused parts (a) and (b), repeating much of the same content in both parts.

- (a) Of the three sections to this question this was often the weakest response. Much was very general. Responses tended to focus on broad ideas of congestion, pollution and growth in the local population.

- (b) This was a stronger response from most candidates with clear explanations of the costs of such improvements and the implications for the local populations such as:
'To expand the underground and surface rail links large numbers of residents will be affected by the engineering works and they are likely to protest over the noise and mess created by the construction.'
- (c) Stronger responses tended to consider the relative success of a limited number of schemes such as the Elizabeth Line or the extension of the northern underground line in London. Many focused on the success of 'Boris Bikes' but tended to ignore the infrastructure implications such as the creation of bike lanes. Surprisingly few candidates considered the various traffic charging policies that have been used to reduce traffic flows in cities. Weaker responses lacked critical evaluation, offering descriptive rather than analytical commentary.

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Key messages

- Candidates should read the questions thoroughly, considering each word before answering the question. Candidates who missed key command words gave less effective responses, especially in **Section B**. The term 'pattern' seems to be poorly understood.
- Teachers are encouraged to use up to date and relevant examples and case studies to support students' learning. Where the question asks for examples, these are required for candidates to access the higher levels, and should be relevant and appropriate. They should be more detailed than simply the name of a country. Examples are often helpful in developing detail or clarifying a point even if not specifically mentioned in the question too. Case studies should include accurate facts and be relatively recent, preferably within the lifetime of the candidates, and should be applied to the question by selecting relevant information. Responses which detail all parts of a well-learned case study often lack focus.
- The mark allocation not only indicates the range of points expected but also the time that should be spent on that section. The 15 mark part (c) in **Section B** is worth 25 per cent of the total marks, paper whereas the part (c) in section A is usually worth 10 per cent or less. The time spent on these two parts should reflect their share of the marks. Overall **Section A** and **B** carry equal marks so candidates should spend equal amounts of time on them.

General comments

- When a question asks candidates to compare, such as **Question 1(a)**, they must make clear statements linking relevant information together. Separate descriptions is not a comparison.
- Candidates should avoid making generalised and inaccurate statements about areas, regions or countries. Geographical language is encouraged in descriptions, such as the use of compass points and references to named continents when describing global patterns from a map in **Question 2(a)**.
- Candidates should avoid using generalised terms such as infrastructure, technology and resources without any clarification of what they mean or include, such as in **Question 2(b)**.
- Where a question refers to a particular context, such as LICs in **Question 4(c)** candidates are expected to relate their answers to this context rather than give generic answers or use examples from countries that are clearly not in this category.
- Part (c) questions in **Section B** always require assessment or evaluation. Candidates should be aware that this requires a balanced consideration of different aspects of an issue. Many weaker responses either have no concluding remarks or simply end their answer with a simple sentence stating that they agree with or disagree with a statement.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Population/Migration

Question 1

- (a) Many candidates made clear comparisons and quoted data from the graph (dates and population figures) to support their points. Responses with separate descriptions of the changes in each country gained no marks.
- (b) Most candidates were able to give reasons; the best responses referred to the overall decrease in population resulting from a combination of negative natural increase and net out migration. Additional explanation such as linking migration since 2007 to Romania joining the EU also gained credit.
- (c) There were some good responses that gave reasons about large areas of desert or tundra or cold climate and about the difficulty of providing a transport network over large distances. These were supported with examples such as Australia, Namibia, Canada and Mongolia. However, many candidates gave answers about birth rates and migration, or low levels of economic development. Many gave examples that were not valid, such as Singapore and Japan.

Population/Migration/Settlement dynamics

Question 2

- (a) Better responses gave clear descriptions of patterns by referring to areas such as South America and much of Africa and Asia having low percentages born in other countries, or described the common characteristics of areas in particular categories, e.g., *'the countries that have 10% and more born elsewhere are mainly HICs'*. Other good responses referred to lines of latitude, for example *'Most of the countries in the 10% and over category are north of the Tropic of Cancer whereas the areas between the Tropics mostly have countries with less than 5% born in another country'*. Weaker responses simply listed the different categories and/or used limited geographical language to describe locations.
- (b) Most candidates were able to give two valid reasons. Some wrote at length when a simple statement such as *'Migrants are attracted to HICs because of job opportunities and the chance of higher wages'* would suffice for one mark. Some reasons were too vague such as *'better quality of life'* or *'better infrastructure'* or *'better living conditions.'*
- (c) This question was generally answered well, with candidates giving a number of explanations involving job opportunities, availability of low cost housing, public transport, proximity to facilities such as education and health care as well as being able to join a community of other migrants. Some responses focused on the CBD, and these did not achieve high marks because they lacked the required focus on inner city areas.

Settlement dynamics

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates were able to identify three problems shown in the photograph. Some gave answers for which there was no evidence in the photograph, such as high rates of unemployment.
- (b) Similarly, most candidates were able to give advantages based on the evidence. The most common responses included that as they are small and look to be self-built, they are likely to be low cost, and given the proximity of the houses to each other there may be a sense of community. Some candidates suggested reasons for which there was no evidence in the photograph, such as the houses had solar power, or they were close to places of work such as factories.
- (c) Most candidates were able to give a number of reasons. Some referred to the photograph, and while this was not required these answers gained credit. However, few responses gained full marks because simple descriptions were given without development or exemplification. Candidates should avoid making generalised statements about the people who live in these areas. Better responses focused on the physical environment and infrastructure.

Section B

Population

Question 4

- (a) (i) Most candidates were able to give a good concise answer based on a well-learned definition of the term.
- (ii) Most candidates were able to give some explanation covering the idea that both population and resources are dynamic so that the idea of a 'capacity' is difficult to assess. Some referred to difficulties in assessing precise quantities of both population and resources or discussed the idea that new discoveries or rapid depletion of resources would change the balance.
- (b) Most candidates were able to give at least basic explanations. The best responses were able to give explanations with valid exemplification that included recognisable detail. Some gave examples based on a country such as Bangladesh while others described particular areas – often densely populated urban areas. Some good explanations also related their answers to the concept of carrying capacity from 4(a). However, some responses were very general and lacked exemplification, or referred to just one or two issues such as congestion or food. Weaker candidates limited their exemplification to 'e.g., Bangladesh' which gained no credit. Some responses contained weak or spurious data, for example about the percentage of unemployment or number of children out of school in various countries. These examples also gained no credit.
- (c) Examiners saw a number of different approaches to this question that produced good responses. Some related their answer to different stages of the demographic transition model while others discussed the statement in terms of the ideas of Malthus and Boserup. Some discussed China's rapid economic growth in relation to its reduction in birth rate, and this approach was valid because these answers referred to China's low income status when birth rate was high.

Relatively few responses gained high marks in this question because answers were often long and generalised accounts that were not related to economic development, hence they lacked coherence. Many of these answers simply described the causes and problems of high birth rate and rapid population growth with little or no mention of economic development. Exemplification in weaker responses was poor, with many simply saying '*In Niger....*' or other named countries, or attempted to generalise across the whole African continent. Some responses gave incorrect or spurious information to attempt to support an argument.

The question was framed in the context of LICs, but some candidates ignored this and discussed economic growth in general or referred to countries with declining birth rates and ageing populations such as Japan or Australia. These answers gained no credit.

Migration/Settlement dynamics

Question 5

- (a) Most candidates were able to give some specific reasons for urban-urban migration. Some responses gave vague or generalised explanations such as 'for better infrastructure' which gained no credit. When it was given, exemplification was generally weak, amounting to little more than naming two cities, or included vague and inaccurate reasoning.
- (b) Examiners saw some good answers which used relevant and detailed examples, the best of which were drawn from the candidates' own country, and even personal experience. These answers tended to focus on changes in the family life cycle and economic factors. However, many answers rarely addressed the question of why this sort of migration has increased in recent years, which the question asked.

There were many answers that were general accounts with little explanation and with exemplification taking the form of naming a city. These responses did not score well. Some candidates did not appreciate what is meant by intra-urban (despite this being clearly explained in the question) and instead explained the movement between urban areas, and some described international migration. These responses gained no marks.

- (c) Stronger responses often discussed the issues around rural–urban migration in LICs/MICs and the growth of squatter settlements. There were also some good responses that discussed the hukou system in China that places restrictions on migrants from rural areas accessing urban benefits. However, many responses failed to gain higher level marks because they were generalised

accounts with little detail or exemplification. Some responses simply resorted to suggesting government action that bore little or no relation to reality.

Population/Migration/Settlement dynamics

Question 6

- (a) Few candidates attempted **Question 6**, but those that did often scored high marks, describing the characteristics in terms of buildings (function and height), commercial and retail land use, land values, accessibility, and small resident population. The best responses described the CBDs of specific cities.
- (b) The strongest responses showed good specific knowledge of a named city, discussing issues such as pollution, congestion, transport systems and land values.
- (c) The most able candidates responded well to this question and discussed the idea that after a point, urban expansion becomes impossible (often due to physical barriers) or difficult to manage (such as providing services throughout a city) or problems such as pollution and congestion making growth unsustainable. Some good responses were based on a case study of a particular city such as Tokyo, Hong Kong, Beijing or Rio de Janeiro, with the best responses comparing the issues of cities in MICs/LICs with those in HICs.

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Key messages

- Candidates should read the questions thoroughly, considering each word before answering the question. Candidates who missed key command words gave less effective responses, especially in **Section B**. The term 'pattern' seems to be poorly understood.
- Teachers are encouraged to use up to date and relevant examples and case studies to support students' learning. Where the question asks for examples, these are required for candidates to access the higher levels, and should be relevant and appropriate. They should be more detailed than simply the name of a country. Examples are often helpful in developing detail or clarifying a point even if not specifically mentioned in the question too. Case studies should include accurate facts and be relatively recent, preferably within the lifetime of the candidates, and should be applied to the question by selecting relevant information. Responses which detail all parts of a well-learned case study often lack focus.
- The mark allocation not only indicates the range of points expected but also the time that should be spent on that section. The 15 mark part (c) in **Section B** is worth 25 per cent of the total marks, paper whereas the part (c) in section A is usually worth 10 per cent or less. The time spent on these two parts should reflect their share of the marks. Overall **Section A** and **B** carry equal marks so candidates should spend equal amounts of time on them.

General comments

- Geographical language is encouraged in descriptions, such as the use of compass points and references to named continents when describing global patterns from a map in **Question 3(a)**.
- Part (c) questions in **Section B** always require assessment or evaluation. Candidates should be aware that this requires a balanced consideration of different aspects of an issue. Many weaker responses either have no concluding remarks or simply end their answer with a simple sentence stating that they agree with or disagree with a statement.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Population/Migration

Question 1

- (a) (i) Most candidates answered this correctly.
- (ii) Most candidates answered this correctly.
- (b) Most candidates were able to suggest at least one valid reason.
- (c) Most candidates were able to relate this to the issues of an ageing population and the impacts on government expenditure and dependency ratios.

Population/Migration/Settlement dynamics

Question 2

- (a) (i) Most candidates answered this correctly.
- (ii) Most candidates gave the correct answer, but some did not show all elements of their working.
- (b) Most candidates were able to give valid reasons, but some wrote excessively (up to one page of the exam paper) for a question that only carried 2 marks. Some candidates did not relate their answer to HICs as stated in the question.
- (c) Candidates who understood that this question was largely about counter-urbanisation and urban-rural migration were able to give good answers, the best having an element of exemplification. Some candidates did not refer to the HIC context and these responses did not score well.

Settlement dynamics

Question 3

- (a) Some candidates were able to give clear and accurate descriptions using geographical language such as compass directions. However, many were not able to describe the distribution in terms of common features or patterns and answers were limited to '*most are located on the coast*'.
- (b) Most responses gave only one valid reason (accessibility of the coast for ports and trade). Some gave tourism as a reason, suggesting that the cities were beach resorts, which was not credited.
- (c) Overall, this was not answered well, with few responses giving more than one valid reason.

Section B

Population

Question 4

- (a) (i) Most candidates were able to give a good answer based on a well-learned definition of the term.
- (ii) Most responses gave some explanation covering the idea that both population and resources are dynamic so that the idea of an optimum is difficult to assess. Some referred to difficulties in assessing precise quantities of both population and resources or discussed the idea that new discoveries or rapid depletion of resources would change the balance.
- (b) The stronger responses for this question were based on a good understanding of the term 'food security'. These discussed developments in agriculture, food production and distribution, population change and the impact of environmental issues such as climate, pests and soil degradation. The best responses related the issues discussed to countries at different levels of economic development.
- (c) Most responses were framed in terms of Malthus versus Boserup. The best responses supported the answer with good exemplification, but in many examples were very basic or little more than naming a country or writing '*In many African countries....*' and as a result these answers did not achieve the higher marks.

Migration/Settlement dynamics

Question 5

There were too few candidates who answered this question to give meaningful comments.

Population/Migration/Settlement dynamics

Question 6

There were too few candidates who answered this question to give meaningful comments.

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Key messages

The main key message is that candidates should read the questions very carefully and identify the specific requirements of the question. This was evident in **Question 4**, where changes to the shape and size of the spit were described by many candidates rather than position, which was the focus of the question. The use of specific, geographical examples was often excellent, but it needs stressing that the examples should be accurate, relevant to the question and useful for underpinning any evaluation. Specific examples of mass movements, cited in **Question 9**, were sometimes inaccurate and inadequate.

General comments

All the essay questions were evaluative in some respect. Thus **Question 12** was an ‘extent to which’ evaluation, **Question 11** was an examination of the role of, and **Question 8** was an assessment of the effectiveness of methods of managing volcanic hazards. The approach adopted in the answers should reflect these varying forms of questions. Evaluation can be sustained throughout the answers or summarised at the end in general conclusions. But there needs to be some evaluation. Often, answers demonstrated good knowledge and understanding but this knowledge and understanding were rarely directed towards a realistic evaluation.

Candidates generally displayed a good understanding of the relevant geographical concepts. Most seemed well prepared for the examination and the quality of many of the answers was very good. Many answers were thoughtful and logical with an impressive level of detail, though care must always be taken to ensure it is relevant to the question.

Time keeping seemed excellent and there were very few rubric infringements such as answering two essay questions in an option or answering too many options.

Comments on specific questions

Tropical environments

Question 1

- (a) Candidates had to describe variations in depth of weathered granite in a 2250 metre transect in northern Nigeria. The resource also showed varying depths of deposited sediment overlying the weathered granite. This caused problems for some candidates in their interpretation of the depth of actual weathered granite. However, by working their way along the transect most candidates were able to make some relevant points.
- (b) This question asked for reasons for the variations in the depth of weathered granite. The depth related to the degree of weathering of the rock. Greater depth indicated more weathering which mostly relates to variability in the physical characteristics of the granite, namely closer spacing of the joints. Many candidates realised this but a significant number did not. In this question there seemed to be a difficulty in applying knowledge and understanding to an unfamiliar situation. Some candidates suggested factors which would not have varied over the short distance of the transect. In general, there was a weak response to this question.

Question 2

This was by far the more popular of the two essay questions in this option. Case studies chosen for discussion were mainly from rainforest ecosystems. There were some good, detailed case studies but many were very generalised and chose examples which precluded detailed evaluation. Using the entire area of the Amazon rainforest made it very difficult to assess attempted solutions to the problems it faced. Some answers were unbalanced with a greater emphasis on solutions to the problems without clearly explaining what the problems were. This was especially true of savanna ecosystem case studies. The Zimbabwean CAMPFIRE initiative was frequently discussed without a clear description of the problems that were being managed.

Question 3

There were very few answers to this question and it is difficult to make general comments. Most candidates who answered this question realised that diurnal variations in climate were affected by seasonal variations and that the annual movement of the intertropical convergence zone (ITCZ) was a key factor. Knowledge of diurnal variations was generally secure and many answers were highly creditable.

Coastal environments

Question 4

- (a) The resource was a map of changes to East Head spit, Sussex, UK, from 1786 to 2005. Candidates had to describe changes to the position of the spit between those two years. Position was emphasised in the question to indicate the element that needed analysis. However, most candidates concentrated more on shape or size rather than position, a clear indication of not reading the question carefully. Also, some candidates that did concentrate on position described the changes not in geographical ways using points of the compass but by referring to right or left.
- (b) Most candidates realised that this was a question about spit development and the changes that could occur. Thus, answers that referred to possible changes in direction and strength of prevailing winds, variations in type of waves and wave energy and fluctuations in sediment movement and availability obtained good credit. With respect to the last point, the effects of beach management were often stressed.

Question 5

There were few answers to this question and it is difficult to make general comments. Overall, there were few good answers. There were two parts to the question: sediment sources and characteristics. Analysis of sediment sources tended to be better than discussion of the characteristics of the sediments. The most frequently discussed sediment source was marine erosion from cliffs followed by marine deposition from offshore. Sediment from rivers was often ignored.

Question 6

This was by far the more popular of the two essay questions in this option and there were many excellent answers. The Holderness coast in eastern England was the main stretch of coast analysed but the north Norfolk and Dorset coasts were also frequently discussed. But there were other interesting stretches of coast discussed in Sri Lanka, West and East Africa and southern USA. In contrast to these good, specific examples, some answers simply identified a stretch of coast and then did not provide any detail. Some stretches of coastline were too large, such as the entire eastern coast of North America. Such answers were essentially generic which made assessing the effectiveness of the engineering strategies very difficult. As in the past with questions of this nature, many candidates did not discuss sustainability in a coherent way. Thus, knowledge and understanding were good but evaluation was often lacking or inadequate.

Hazardous environments

Question 7

- (a) The nature of this resource caused some confusion. The resource portrayed the number of hurricanes per year in the Atlantic Ocean from 1920 to 2020. The data was subdivided into major and non-major hurricanes. Thus, to interpret the number of major hurricanes it was necessary to subtract the number of non-major hurricanes from the total. However, many candidates did not realise this and were interpreting the number of major hurricanes as the total number of hurricanes. This meant that any comparison of numbers was faulty as they were comparing number of non-

major hurricanes with the total number and not the number of major hurricanes. Also, the question asked for a comparison whereas many candidates provided simple descriptions of the two types of hurricanes separately.

- (b) This question asked for suggested reasons for the variation in hurricane frequency. Variation in frequency will be due to the variations in the conditions necessary for hurricane formation. The temperature of the ocean water is the most important and most candidates referred to possible increased sea surface temperatures as a result of global warming. This not only may increase sea temperatures at a particular location but may also increase the area of sea with suitable temperatures. Some candidates suggested that sea-level rise would increase hurricane numbers as they thought that the sea had to be deeper than sixty metres. Sixty metres is the depth to which temperatures of the water have to be suitable. Also, the small increase in sea level will have minimal effect. There were some good examples, but many answers simply mentioned global warming without any discussion as to why.

Question 8

This was the less popular essay question in this option. The question asked for an assessment of different methods of managing volcanic hazards. Many candidates interpreted the question as managing volcanoes with little reference to specific hazards. Thus, there were many detailed accounts of the monitoring of volcanoes and prediction of eruptions with little reference to specific hazards. Details on specific volcanic eruptions were often inaccurate. However, there were many excellent answers which did consider the management of specific volcanic hazards with sustained evaluation.

Question 9

There were many excellent and detailed answers to this question. Examples chosen to underpin the assessment were many and varied. Most candidates realised that it was not easy to assess which was the most significant cause of the mass movements because of the interaction of both human and natural factors. Thus, precipitation was often cited as the main cause but that its effect was increased by human activities, both past and present. Understanding of the causes of mass movement was generally sound. Although there were many excellent examples of mass movement, there were many that were inaccurate or did not reflect the conclusions reached. Also, there were a few instances where candidates attempted to draw general conclusions from a single example.

Hot arid and semi-arid environments

Question 10

- (a) Answered well by many candidates with most of the physical features in the mark scheme mentioned. The question asked for a description of the features rather than just a listing. Thus, simply mentioning a wadi was an identification and not a description.
- (b) The influence of water in shaping the landscape shown in the resource was usually with respect to fluvial erosion and weathering where water was involved. This was usually well done although the detail of the specific processes involved was often limited. Past pluvial conditions were often cited.

Question 11

There were many excellent answers to this question especially with respect to the role of human factors in the process of desertification. The better answers outlined the essential nature of desertification before discussing the factors causing it. The Sahel was the main specific example with which to discuss desertification but with varying detail. There was the occasional confusion between desert formation and desertification.

Question 12

Most candidates were able to obtain reasonable marks by noting the main causes of aridity. The key element of the question was in the evaluation of those causes. Many answers were very descriptive with little evaluation and with few specific examples to justify any evaluation offered which made it difficult to achieve marks above the top of Level 2. However, there were many answers that were thorough, detailed and with sustained evaluation throughout.

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General comments

Overall, this paper seemed to cause a few problems for candidates. Some candidates met the demands of the questions very well but there were a large number of responses that only partially answered the question, providing either unbalanced or incomplete arguments. Quite often the evaluative essays just became a description of factors with no real assessment of the question itself. For example, **Question 6** was often answered with a list of threats to coral reefs with little justification for the candidate's decision on which was the greatest threat. Whilst this will have gained some credit it showed many candidates were not focusing in on the precise demands of the question.

In other cases, there was a lack of specific knowledge when applying examples accurately. Sometimes only the name of a country was given which does not really help in answering the question. Detailed and precise knowledge of located examples is a key to success. This was particularly true in **Question 12**, where often generic problems and solutions were identified without precise case study detail.

The best essay answers, those with sustained evaluation, were the ones that gave value judgements throughout the answer, rather than just in the conclusion. This allowed candidates to focus on the specific demands of the question as they would be constantly referring back to it in their answer.

Comments on specific questions

Tropical environments

Question 1

- (a) The first part of **Question 1**, a description of the photograph, was reasonably well done. Description of photographs is best done by being precise about 'where' in the photograph the feature is found and then some adjective to give it description. In this case the descriptions of vegetation were generally sound. Some candidates spoke about 'the tree' – although it is almost certain they were talking about the baobab in the centre of the photograph this is an example of where they need to be specific. Some candidates also went on to explain some of the characteristics shown – this was unnecessary of this question as it was the task for **part (b)**.
- (b) Again, most candidates were able to give some good answers about the adaptations of vegetation to the seasonally humid climate. The best answers described the climate first and then linked in three or more adaptations found in the photograph to the characteristics of the climate. However, there were some misconceptions – the idea that some trees absorb water through their leaves and that they are shading the ground to protect other plants. Several candidates were able to access Level 3 (5–6 marks) with relative ease due to a wide-ranging knowledge of both the xerophytic and pyrophytic adaptations of these plants.

Question 2

This was by far the more popular of the two essay questions in this option. Candidates were asked to discuss how far they agreed that the ITCZ was the main factor determining humid tropical climates. Several candidates did not answer the question directly and discussed the role of the ITCZ in seasonal tropical climates. Some also answered the question as if it were asking about the humid tropical environment as a whole rather than just the climate and so went into discussions of plant adaptations. The best answers discussed the role of the ITCZ both in terms of temperature and precipitation and evaluated it in comparison

to other factors affecting the climate such as altitude, air masses, ocean currents and also the role of vegetation.

Question 3

This question was not nearly as popular as **Question 2** and those that did attempt it did not generally answer the question very well. There was some confusion over how soils form and there were several very generic answers that did not understand the question. Few answers mentioned soil forming processes such as laterization or humification, and specific soil types such as oxisols/latosols and tropical red/brown earths were rarely discussed. Often the focus was on things that affect the amount of soil, for example soil erosion via wind or flooding, rather than the factors influencing its actual formation. Better answers covered the importance of time, relief, parent material, climate, vegetation and human influences to assess which the candidates considered to be the dominant factor.

Coastal environments

Question 4

- (a) This was a reasonably well answered question. Candidates needed to identify four different aspects of the pattern of beach volume changes. Most candidates were able to read off the graph effectively, identifying the highest and lowest values and the distance along the coast, the fluctuating nature of the pattern, the overall change and the differences in certain parts of the coastline. Answers that simply went through the highs and lows along the graph gained little credit as this did not identify any particular pattern.
- (b) This question required candidates to suggest two reasons for the pattern shown. A few candidates wrote more than two reasons and the best two were credited. Some candidates did not really appreciate the nature of this stretch of coastline – many wrote about the geology and talked about hard and soft rocks creating bays and headlands which were not relevant in this case, as this is all about beach volume. The better answers identified reasons such as different wave energy, the role of longshore drift, and the influence of humans in terms of hard or soft engineering. Some candidates were able to identify reasons but then did not fully explain the way in which these reasons affected the pattern.

Question 5

This was the much less popular essay question in this option, and there were a range of responses. Some candidates gave details about a range of processes without really mentioning landforms as such, and there was some confusion over what constituted sub-aerial processes. Several candidates confused erosion and weathering, and some did not mention mass movements at all. The best answers were ones that identified the range of potential processes and how they interacted to form a selection of erosional landforms. These answers often concluded that geology might have been the dominant factor, with sub-aerial processes aiding erosion processes in forming these landforms, alongside other factors such as wave energy and human factors. The scope of this question was very wide, and some candidates only focused on a narrow range of processes or landforms. For a good answer several different landforms and factors needed to be assessed.

Question 6

This was the most popular essay question in the paper. There were many good examples of well-structured responses with a range of factors affecting coral reefs discussed. The best answers were those that discussed the threats to the conditions that coral reefs require, such as water temperature, turbidity/light availability, acidity, and lack of physical disturbance. Many candidates knew about a wide range of threats to these conditions but sometimes the evaluation of these threats was lost as candidates tended to list the range of threats without assessing their relative importance. There were some instances where candidates were very vague about what pollution actually entailed and often focused just on one type, such as plastic pollution, rather than the range of different types. Sea-level rise also tended to cause issues – many candidates saw this as a major threat but coral can grow faster than sea-level rises, if not stressed, so often the nuance was lost here. Better answers also reflected upon the manageability and relative intensity of threats, and the global vs local nature of them. Again, the scope of this question was very wide and some candidates only covered a very narrow range of threats.

Hazardous environments

Question 7

- (a) This question was a relatively straightforward one which asked candidates to describe the variations on a map. Most candidates scored well by referring directly to the figure, quoting data and the names of places in their answers.
- (b) This question caused some confusion amongst candidates, for although they had managed to describe the variations in **part (a)**, many misinterpreted what the figure was showing. Typhoon Haiyan moved from south-east to north-west on the map, but many candidates thought it was moving in the opposite direction, and some based their answers on the idea that the storm was losing power as it travelled over land. In fact, the storm surge was gaining height as it moved north-west through the bay due to the narrowing and shallowing of the bay area. Very few candidates were able to access Level 3 (6–7 marks) from the mark scheme due to this confusion.

Question 8

This was the more popular essay question in this option and again there were a range of responses. Several candidates were unclear about the exact nature of soil liquefaction and there seemed to be some confusion between liquefaction and mudflows. Most candidates were able to consider a range of hazards associated with earthquakes although a significant number considered impacts such as disease and collapsing buildings to be hazards. A few also strayed into volcanic hazards. The majority of candidates decided that soil liquefaction was probably not the most significant hazard and that tsunamis were. Case studies were well-utilised to exemplify the differences between the hazards, and several candidates also used level of development, and hence capacity to cope, as a discriminator between the effects of different hazards. The best answers were those that evaluated each hazard based on both the impacts and the location and came to a supported judgement about why one particular hazard was more significant than another.

Question 9

This was the less popular essay question in this option. Candidates were able to identify both hurricanes and tornadoes as atmospheric disturbances and many documented the different hazards produced by each. However, the management of these then often involved discussing the general management of the disturbances, rather than the management of the specific hazards associated with each. For example, many candidates wrote about preparation and prediction but did not link these specifically to hazards such as high winds, storm surges, flooding and landslides (in the case of hurricanes). Most answers were therefore rather too generic and whilst they did assess the management of the disturbances, they did not focus in on the management of the hazards themselves. The best answers were able to identify the difficulties in managing different hazards from different disturbances, in particular the challenges in predicting tornadoes, and were able to differentiate between the different hazards of each disturbance.

Hot arid and semi-arid environments

Question 10

- (a) This was a generally well-answered question where candidates were mostly able to read off the graph effectively and identify the climate characteristics at certain times of the year. Figures were usually quoted accurately, although some candidates did confuse rainfall with temperature, reading from the wrong axis which meant the figures they arrived at were inaccurate.
- (b) This question caused a few problems as several candidates did not notice that this was in an area of Australia, so the seasons were reversed. Therefore, they would say that summer was colder with no rain (April–October). Several candidates did recognise the seasonal variations and equated this with the movement of the ITCZ, although further explanation of the causes of the ITCZ would have been useful. Candidates also need to take note of all the information they are given – the altitude of 315 m may have had some impact on orographic uplift, and the distance from the coast (400 km) may have influenced a certain amount of continentality. The command word ‘suggest’ means that there are no exact answers here, but candidates should apply their geographical knowledge to the conditions given in the resource.

Question 11

This question was often not answered well as many candidates did not give an indication of how or where the water came from to produce landforms in hot arid or semi-arid environments. A recognition that many

water landforms are products either of past pluvials or intermittent heavy showers was required to enable candidates to access high marks. Alongside this, explanation of processes (such as fluvial erosion and types of weathering) were necessary in the discussion of landform formation. Most candidates were able to discuss the role of wind as an alternative agent for producing landforms but often the extent to which these landforms were produced by water or wind was not explored in detail. The best answers assessed a range of landforms produced by different processes and concluded that perhaps water was more dominant in the past, whereas wind may be the more dominant factor today.

Question 12

This question required candidates to use detailed examples from a case study to evaluate solutions to the problems of sustainable management. The focus here should be on identifying what the problems are, and then discussing how successful, in terms of sustainability, the management strategies applied had been. Most candidates wrote relatively generic answers – they would name a location and then list a series of management solutions, often without identifying the problem that was being managed. Specific located details were also quite rare even though one of the syllabus requirements for this part of the course is to learn about a detailed located case study of sustainable management. The best answers would relate specific management strategies to problems and evaluate the success of these in terms of economic, social and environmental sustainability.

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Paper 9696/33
Advanced Physical Geography Options

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/41
Advanced Human Geography Options

Key messages

1. Some parts of each option are more popular than others and all parts of the option should be prepared for. This was particularly true for **Question 8** and **Question 9**.
2. The skills aspects of the structured **Questions 4, 7** and **10** were not strong. In **Question 4(a)**, description of the distribution was weak, for **Question 7(a)**, most candidates did not notice that the two lines were a mirror of each other and in **Question 10(a)** candidates needed to use language of qualification rather than simply counting numbers. **Question 1(a)** was relatively well done. For the **part (b)** questions there is still a need to identify the requirement within the question. For **Question 1(b)** how the disadvantages are linked to the intensification of agriculture, **Question 7(b)** the links between trade agreements and patterns of trade and **Question 10(b)**, the disadvantages of economic measures and indices not the advantages of others such as social or environmental.

General comments

1. Some responses still seem formulaic and do not address the central point in the question. The better essays are always those that have been carefully planned and have a clear structure to them. An introductory paragraph to 'signpost' the way the essay is going to go is always useful – especially if the candidate runs out of time. It can help give some clarity/detail. A good practice sometimes seen or clearly in evidence is to use PEEL as the structure:

P = Point. Identify the point you are going to make.

E = Example. Incorporate an example to illustrate the point you have made at the beginning.

E = Explain. Explain how the example supports the point.

L = Link. Link the point you have made back to the original question – in effect a sort of mini-evaluation.

A final paragraph that will summarise the different points that have been made throughout the essay is needed but just repeating all the points already made does not achieve very much. The final paragraph needs to clearly answer the finer points of the question e.g. if the question has asked for 'evaluate the relative importance of...' the final paragraph should state which of the points discussed is the most important and why (**Question 11**, **Question 12**).

2. Evaluation can effectively be done in several ways, and it may well depend on what the actual question is. The easiest way is to evaluate at the end of every paragraph or for each point that is made. This worked well with **Question 11** and **Question 12**, where candidates needed to evaluate the relative importance of factors/difficulties. A short summative sentence at the end of each point acts as the 'link' and then the final paragraph indicates which factor is the most important. The 'How far do you agree with this statement?' question (**Question 3**, **Question 8**) may have a 'points for', 'points against' approach, with little ongoing evaluative comment but then requires a summative evaluative conclusion which is clear and considerable.

Comments on specific questions

Production, location and change

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates used evidence from the photograph such as the robots, the irrigation pipes and the nature of the building and were able to link these pieces of evidence to the processes and how

they are evidence of technology being used to intensify food production. Stronger responses identified specific technologies visible in the image, such as robotic harvesters, automated sprinkler systems, or climate-controlled greenhouse structures. These candidates were able to describe the application of such technologies clearly. Weaker responses made vague references to 'modern technology' or 'machines' without linking these to the visual resource.

- (b) The two most common disadvantages were environmental issues of soil erosion and water pollution, whilst others seen included loss of employment and health issues from the use of chemicals. The better responses explained how the disadvantage was linked to intensification, e.g. fertilisers used to increase production and to add nutrients where fallow periods are shortened and then explained the disadvantage.

Question 2

Demand was frequently seen as a factor influencing the amount of production linked to factors which increase or decrease demand at a basic level e.g. rising population increases demand, so more crops are grown. Better responses developed factors which influence demand such as changing consumer preferences, seasonality, competition, and considered how demand variations influence decision making about land use choices and the practices used. Distance from markets was mostly seen as increasing transport costs and proximity to markets being required for perishable products. Some valid references to the theory of Von Thunen were also seen. Very few candidates considered markets at various scales and distances e.g. factors which influence choices of land use or practices for export products. There appears to be some confusion over the term extensive agriculture, with candidates arguing that close to urban centres, extensive agriculture is more likely.

Question 3

This question was much less popular than **Question 2**. Most candidates displayed knowledge of some advantages e.g. reduction of infrastructure costs/provision of services, industrial linkages, availability and skills of labour, separation of industrial activities from others and knowledge of some disadvantages e.g. competition for land, concentrated pollution and traffic congestion. There was more likely to be a balance towards the advantages. Areas of weakness or aspects to improve were examples of types of industry and place examples of areas of industrial agglomeration.

Environmental management

Question 4

- (a) Candidates found this distribution question particularly challenging. Weaker responses described patterns in terms of economic development (which is not shown on Fig. 4.1) or focused on individual countries (e.g. 'India has high use of solar power') rather than focusing on the distribution. Better responses built on the skills of identifying the general pattern e.g. found in all continents and then considering how far the distribution is clustered or dispersed, with comment on both levels of power generation, 10.1–50.0 and 50.1 and above.
- (b) Resource endowment was commonly cited as a reason for renewable energy adoption, with candidates referring to factors such as sunlight availability or wind speeds. However, explanations were often basic e.g. Norway has more advantages for HEP than high rainfall or a mountainous landscape. It would be better to consider how the landscape provides opportunities for both large-scale and numerous small-scale projects and how many of the schemes do not involve expensive cross-river dam construction but rely on river diversion, so have lower cost and environmental impact.

Question 5

Better responses focused on fossil fuels and reasons why they continue to be important in the production of electrical energy. These reasons were about the advantages of fossil fuel use or the disadvantages of renewable sources. For fossil fuels, these included meeting demand for countries with high rates of population growth and/or industrialisation, relative efficiency and reliability at producing large amounts of electrical energy, or supply factors such as relative abundance and ease of extraction and storage of coal, presence of current generating capacity and infrastructure, and not weather dependent. Few candidates understand that 'oil' is not used widely to generate electricity and that natural gas is a significant contributor in a range of countries such as Nigeria and Saudi Arabia with large reserves but also in countries such as

the UK where the energy transition is more advanced. The disadvantages of renewables largely focused on lack of reliability, weather dependence, cost of and/or issues adapting infrastructure. Less successful responses were quite generalised about fossil fuels and drifted into the advantages of exporting the resource rather than their use to generate electrical energy or exploring reasons why fossil fuel usage was declining and continued with extensive coverage of the advantages of renewables – this was the focus of **Question 4(b)**.

Question 6

Most candidates demonstrated a good awareness of the challenges related to water access in terms of supply issues, increasing demand, and loss of sources due to pollution and climate change. There were some sound case study details such as water pollution of the Ganges River, and water aid projects in countries such as Mali. Better responses considered how water for drinking is made safe and why there are variations in the provision of safe water e.g. by level of development or rural/urban differences. Some responses, however, were imbalanced to the causes of water pollution rather than critically assessing the extent to which safe and affordable drinking water can be provided universally.

Global interdependence

Question 7

- (a) Candidates generally recognised the falling trend of HICs and rising trend of LICs/MICs, but few noted that the two are a mirror or an indirect/negative relationship. Many achieved a second mark for recognising that the trends in both cases are not constant but have a period of fluctuation and general plateauing before a reversal of the general trend at the end of the time period.
- (b) The key to a successful response was to link the explanation to patterns of trade. The most common examples were increased trade between members of a trade agreement and exclusion of non-member countries, through the operation of free trade and external tariffs. Some responses also referred to quotas and standards. Some candidates wanted to focus on very recent tariff announcements from the USA, which at the time of the examination had not developed into trade agreements.

Question 8

There was broad awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of international debt. Better responses had support examples from a range of countries which have faced issues from high levels of debt e.g. Greece, Ghana, Ethiopia, Uganda and Sri Lanka. These responses were also balanced towards the advantages and disadvantages of debt but were able to state a view, illustrate it and conclude by explaining the point of view taken. Some responses considered the position of lenders as well as borrowers with respect to the question. The most common example here was the advantages for China of their investments in some African and Asian countries and some of the disadvantages for the countries receiving the finance. These better responses also considered how international debt is used by HICs as well as LICs and MICs. The topic of debt relief was well understood by some candidates but in some cases was viewed quite simply as a 'gift' which encourages countries to take out further debt without consequences. Aid also featured in some responses, especially with reference to Haiti. Centres should consider how far aid is financial and whether it links to debt or not.

Question 9

This question was more popular than **Question 8**. This topic is one where candidates rely heavily on their case study, and so responses require careful planning to select and use case study information to answer the question. Better responses had a clear focus on global events such as COVID-19, natural disasters, and global sporting events. They were able to develop both positive and negative impacts of such events and to make contrasts between and within the events. Sustainability was often seen as short-term vs longer term impacts, with some contrasting the recovery of global tourism from COVID-19 and the short-term impacts of major sporting events. Some made thoughtful observations about economic over-reliance on tourism in vulnerable regions. Weaker responses took a view that global events were not important and had little consideration of such events and so lacked balance in terms of the question itself. Many candidates saw climate change as an event not a process and failed to link it to events such as coral bleaching that could threaten the economic and social sustainability of many tropical resorts.

Economic transition

Question 10

- (a) The resource for this question was a graph rather than a map as in **Question 4(a)** but was equally challenging. Better responses noted that the distribution is uneven and found in only 4 of the 7 regions, with a high concentration in Sub-Saharan Africa, whilst the other 3 regions have only a small number (1 or 2). Weaker responses described where LICs are not found and/or where MICs or HICs are found.
- (b) Less successful responses frequently focused on what is not shown by a specific economic measure in comparison to another but different measure and/or drifted to social or environmental measures. Better responses considered how economic measures such as GDP do not consider the distribution of wealth within a country, either regionally or personal wealth, and the difficulties of either collecting or calculating an economic measure. Some candidates were confused about indices such as HDI, ignoring the fact that it does include an economic measure as well as social indicators.

Question 11

Better responses considered how a TNC coordinates the variety of activities associated with operating in different locations i.e. spatial organisation not just locations. Less successful responses considered locational factors for different parts of the business in isolation from how these activities are organised and/or were limited largely to various aspects of labour: supply, cost, skills, unionisation and government policies towards the environment and labour laws. Better responses considered a wider range of factors, developing aspects of government policy e.g. for China, Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and the open-door policy were discussed and/or understood that the labour force available in China is highly trained with the technical skills required to handle complex electronics manufacturing. The spatial organisation of TNCs is governed by control over the various stages of production, so factors such as an efficient and flexible supply chain, the advantages of industrial agglomeration and the ability to respond quickly and efficiently to changes in demand and development of new products are important aspects of manufacturing, whilst the overall spatial organisation is facilitated by developments in communications and transport technology.

Question 12

Better responses recognised that the focus of the question was to evaluate the relative importance of the difficulties of overcoming regional disparities for the chosen country. The difficulties were related to both causal factors and those associated with specific attempts to overcome the regional disparities. Some candidates developed the difficulties by integrating theoretical concepts such as core-periphery and processes such as cumulative causation and backwash effects. These better responses were backed up with specific and accurate details of regions within the country. Popular case studies included Italy, Canada, Brazil, China, and the UK. The responses also maintained a focus on evaluation of the relative importance of the difficulties. Some responses were not well founded, with weak, very generalised knowledge of the regions selected and were often unbalanced mostly towards the core regions.

GEOGRAPHY

<p>Paper 9696/42 Advanced Human Geography Options</p>

Key messages

1. For **part (a)** questions, the resources were testing the skills of interpreting images and data displayed in a range of formats. The command words 'describe the main changes' and 'compare the trends' were not always answered well, with candidates making simple observations. Candidates should be encouraged to find patterns and notice anomalies and describe those they can see.
2. For **part (b)** questions, most candidates should continue to use detailed explanations showing knowledge and understanding, including contextual examples. Candidates can also consider using models or theories to enhance their explanations. In particular, **Question 4(b)** and **Question 10(b)** candidates gave briefer explanations than the demands of the question required to get 6 marks. Two well developed paragraphs are required.
3. For essays questions, these are increasingly well written and argued with more sophistication than has been seen previously. There is increasing use of evidence from case studies integrated into responses, rather than being presented as a narrative. Essay plans continue to be present at the start of essays that stay on track and achieve higher marks.

General comments

Teachers are reminded that all of the content within each of the two chosen topics should be taught. For example, **Question 8** sometimes revealed a lack of knowledge about Fairtrade.

Use of Blackpool, UK, continues to appear in tourism essays, which is a dated example, and candidates should, where possible, be taught about destinations relevant to them and their context. When this was present, essays were far more convincing.

Comments on specific questions

Production, location and change

Question 1

- (a) In most cases candidates understood the idea of functional linkage and were able to identify key aspects of the processes from Fig. 1.1. Some candidates simply repeated statements from the resource with very limited development or explanation. This was slightly self-limiting because it often did not fully convey the meaning of functional linkage. The diagram highlighted that most candidates are not aware of the difference between backward and forward linkages, which are considered key ideas about functional linkages. Very few identified them as such. Most candidates described the components from the EU and then distribution to UK and Europe after manufacturing, gaining 2 marks. Some candidates identified the importance of the different modes of transport, and very few described how the values changed or varied. Candidates are encouraged to use the whole resource when asked to describe and apply their knowledge of keywords and concepts in their descriptions.
- (b) Most candidates focused on issues relating to transport or transport challenges. These observations were generally about the cost of transport, problems with breakdowns and holdups or points linked to the issue of moving products between countries. Responses were very effective when candidates developed these themes to suggest that they might affect production and sales. A limited number of candidates considered other disadvantages, including observations about lack of storage and the logistics of having all parts available at the same time to produce finished products.

A very small number of candidates considered the environmental aspects of moving so many products, with thoughtful observations about issues relating to pollution and sustainability. Some candidates described generic disadvantages of manufacturing, such as localised pollution, which kept responses in Level 1. Those who clearly showed an understanding of the challenges posed by exporting and importing components and limited storage and the unpredictable nature of demand did well. Some candidates showed understanding of the context of recent EU/Brexit geopolitical implications which was good but not necessary for full marks. Use of any named manufacturing industry that uses aspects of the just-in-time (JIT) system could gain full marks.

Question 2

Candidates who answered this question generally took the approach of comparing the advantages of extensive agriculture against the disadvantages, with most candidates also including intensive agriculture to develop the extent of the advantages. In some cases, candidates did not notice the words ‘under cultivation’ and based their response on pastoralism. This approach did not address the key idea expressed in the question and was consequently self-limiting. Those candidates who used an appropriate example often produced thoughtful answers which highlighted advantages in terms of increasing production and food security or greater opportunity for trade, and disadvantages in terms of loss of biodiversity and broader environmental issues.

Question 3

It was clear that a few candidates did not really understand what was meant by ‘the informal sector’ and consequently based their answers on formal manufacturing examples. While some of the resulting factors are the same (links to income, economic development), this approach did not really consider the specific factors linked to the informal sector. Those candidates that did understand the key idea expressed in the question often produced thoughtful responses which highlighted the specific role of the informal sector in supplying work for more marginalised people and generating a considerable proportion of a nation’s GDP. In a small number of cases this was impressively evidenced by using specific data. In most cases answers were quite descriptive and very few candidates considered both ‘manufacturing and services’ as expressed in the question.

Environmental management

Question 4

- (a) In many cases candidates simply repeated the data from Fig. 4.1 with no real appreciation of the idea of ‘main changes’ as expressed in the question. When asked for the main changes, candidates need to do more than describe the changes for each source and should try to note patterns in the changes, for example, sources x, y, z increased and sources p, q, r decreased. Most candidates identified wind and solar as increasing the most and HEP remaining the highest source throughout the years. Use of data should be as accurate as possible, particularly when the grid squares are given; for example, ‘rises to approximately 35 per cent’ is not accurate enough. Qualifying language is preferable to simply stating numbers as it shows understanding of what the changes in the numbers represent.
- (b) Some candidates misinterpreted this question to be about two environmental conditions that lead to problems (e.g. dependent on climate). The question required two environmental problems of using renewable sources, so no credit was given for such answers. Candidates in this situation often explained their second problem correctly, so gained up to 4 marks for well explained answers of one problem. Most candidates chose HEP (The Three Gorges Dam was commonly used) and knew most about problems from HEP such as habitat loss and river regime disruption. Most candidates demonstrated a sound general understanding of the question, and many made points about habitat disruption as a result of the development of renewable infrastructure. At the highest level these points were often developed to include specific information about the impact on biodiversity or bird migration patterns. A very small number of candidates considered the environmental impact of building or disposing of renewable infrastructure, in some cases providing thoughtfully considered responses.

Question 5

A significant proportion of candidates simply accepted the proposition expressed in the question that energy mix was determined by level of development and used examples to support this view. In these terms the

discussion was essentially that highly developed countries had the capital and expertise to use renewable energy (Norway was frequently used) while less developed countries tended to rely on fossil fuels (African countries were frequently quoted). While there was some value in this approach it did not always convey the clear complexity of the question. Several candidates did take this general understanding further by expressing how China had moved from a position of wholly relying on fossil fuels to a more balanced position with a broader energy mix and considering this change in relation to the economic development of the country (with very occasional mention of the Kuznets curve). Use of only one country often led to an inadequate response, unless the candidate chose a country which has gone through different stages of development and were able to show how the energy mix had subsequently changed over time. Most candidates saw this question as the chance to explain how the number of renewables increases as countries develop, however, for oil rich nations this was not always the case. At the highest levels, candidates showed a clear understanding of the complexity of the question by suggesting that level of development was not the only influencing factor and that considerations such as resource endowment and physical geography were also significant in many countries.

Question 6

Responses to this question were mixed. A significant proportion of candidates showed a good general understanding of the question and used appropriate examples to examine how rapid urbanisation and industrial development put pressure on water resources, and alongside poor infrastructure development and management created a situation where water quality issues were almost inevitable. Some candidates were able to explain the complex nature of rising demand and the different users but many focused only on domestic or industrial demand. Few included agricultural demand, an increasing challenge for many countries. Other candidates showed they were more knowledgeable about other factors/causes, often pollution, but then missed the opportunity to make a link between pollution and rising demand. Answers were nearly all focused on countries at the lower end of the development spectrum, however a very small number of candidates observed that in highly developed countries increasing water demand did not usually lead to water quality issues and this observation was thoughtfully used to make appropriate comparative statements.

Global interdependence

Question 7

- (a) The main problem which occurred with this question was candidates comparing the positions of the lines relative to each other, instead of comparing the trends the lines showed. Trend implies changes over the years, so this should have been the focus. The reserve mark indicates a comparison of the overall trends, and a lot of candidates did not get this reserve mark. Those candidates that did address the command generally achieved creditable marks, often referencing how the order of the groups remained the same or how MICs/LICs had risen while HICs had fallen or how the gap between some/all the groups had narrowed.
- (b) A significant proportion of candidates demonstrated an understanding of the question and were able to suggest appropriate reasons why primary products are the main export for some countries. The two main reasons were resource endowment and level of economic development. Points about resource endowment were generally related to either less developed countries where agricultural goods or minerals were major exports or oil rich countries where a significant proportion of export earnings were related to oil/gas exports. A lack of economic development was generally considered a significant factor where countries had not developed a wider manufacturing base and were consequently dependent on primary exports for most of their export income. Candidates displaying an understanding of the different values of primary products on the global market showed more conceptual understanding.

Question 8

There were some excellent answers to this question showing clear understanding of the characteristics of Fairtrade. However, understanding about Fairtrade was variable, with several candidates unaware of the difference between Fairtrade (the organisation, and focus of this question) and fair-trade or free trade (characteristics of the WTO). Those candidates based their answer on the basic idea of 'minimum price' as stated in the question. This idea was then used to express how minimum price allowed producers to have a reasonable income which in turn allowed them to have a reasonable standard of living. While this approach allowed some discussion it was limiting in terms of the key idea expressed in the question, which demanded a discussion about the relative significance of different characteristics of Fairtrade. Those candidates who had a sound knowledge of Fairtrade were able to discuss different aspects alongside minimum pricing, such

as Fairtrade premium, social and environmental conditions, and sustainable farming practices, which were commonly considered, and offer an evaluative judgement.

Question 9

This question was generally well answered. Nearly all candidates demonstrated a thorough understanding of the ways in which the internet plays a part in international tourism, and in most cases, there was an acceptance that it had become increasingly significant in recent years. At the highest levels candidates also considered other factors, including the development of transport, increasing levels of wealth and political decisions, and then made an evaluative judgement about the relative importance of the factors discussed. A small number of candidates took this further by suggesting that while there are several factors that have influenced the development of international tourism, they are essentially all linked, so it is difficult to make a relative judgement about individual factors. Some candidates focused on one destination and the growth that it had experienced, limiting their response. Blackpool in the UK was not a good choice here, as its growth was well before the internet, and arguably, the internet has in part led to its continued decline from domestic rather than international tourists. Some candidates tried to apply the tourism life cycle model which works when discussing the earlier stages, but as the question is about growth, candidates who then began to discuss declining destinations lost their focus. Some candidates chose to evaluate the negatives of the internet (e.g. bad reviews), but this did not always work well as it was inevitably focused on destinations rather than international growth.

Economic transition

Question 10

- (a) Distribution requires candidates to identify clustering and scattering, not just state where the HICs are and are not. Credit was not given for indicating there are none in Africa unless this was linked to them being distributed in all other continents, except Africa. Many candidates were able to use Fig. 10.1 effectively to describe the distribution of HICs. In most cases candidates recognised that they were mostly in the northern hemisphere and that the largest group was in Europe.
- (b) The wording of this question allowed candidates to solely focus on social measures and indices. Most candidates wrote about HDI and other social measures, however, developing the advantages of these proved more of a challenge, often providing brief advantages that could have been developed further. Those candidates who did understand the terminology expressed in the question generally produced sound answers, with several candidates developing quite sophisticated ideas linking specific social measures and inequality with a degree of evaluative thinking.

Question 11

For many candidates this question became a description of how TNCs operate, in most cases with specific examples of TNCs. This approach often gave an opportunity to express the global nature of the companies and consequently allowed candidates to demonstrate some understanding of the question. However, it sometimes led to quite narrow responses which did not always consider other factors contributing to globalisation, even when they were clearly related to TNCs. Candidates can either assess the role of TNCs against the role of other factors or assess the positives against the negatives of TNCs themselves. However, if the latter approach was taken, candidates needed to focus on the role in relation to the globalisation of economic activity. Some candidates incorrectly focused on the negative environmental role TNCs have played. This was partially relevant as an impact but often kept responses in lower Level 3. If the latter approach was taken, then negatives such as HICs remaining dominant, economic leakage, lower tax zones meaning less FDI etc. would have been more relevant.

Question 12

This was a well answered question by most candidates. Most candidates explained three different aspects of the policy and evaluated the extent the strategy/policy had solved the regional disparity. China, Canada and Brazil were commonly used while Italy and the UK featured to a lesser extent. The quality of responses was largely dictated by the level of detail expressed in relation to specific regional strategies. Where candidates had a good level of knowledge about strategies it gave them an opportunity to offer detailed evaluative observations and consequently produce impressive answers. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the policies are regional development policies, and not those which apply to all regions in a country. An

understanding of the initial advantages of core regions and whether these can ever be matched helped to form evaluation.

GEOGRAPHY

<p>Paper 9696/43 Advanced Human Geography Options</p>

There were too few candidates for a meaningful report to be produced.