

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/11
Core Physical Geography

General comments

There was a range of quality seen in responses with some excellent answers. The main problem identified in the responses was that many candidates did not read the questions carefully enough. The Atmosphere and weather question in **Section A** caused problems for many candidates. **Question 1** was accessible to most candidates but **Questions 2(b)** and **2(c)** caused problems because of the command relating to seasonal variation. Many candidates failed to refer to seasonal variation at all. Answers to **Question 3** were encouraging, especially when explaining the role of water in the movement of material on slopes. In **Question 4** a significant number of candidates did not know how drainage density was measured. **Questions 5** and **6** seemed to cause few problems, although there was often a lack of detail in answers to **Question 5(c)**. These points are elaborated on when considering the individual questions.

The use of maps and diagrams and their accuracy remains variable. This would benefit from further focus and development. This was the case for **Question 1(a)**, a sketch map of the delta in Fig. 1.1. However, there were some excellent diagrams of the delta. In questions where a diagram was not specifically asked for, using an illustrative diagram would greatly enhance an answer. All answers to questions in **Section B** could have been improved by the appropriate use of diagrams.

A variety of 'command' words may appear in questions, but in this examination, the ones that dominated were 'describe', 'explain' and 'assess'. It is still the case that some candidates were not sufficiently clinical in their approach, offering explanations when only descriptions were demanded.

In **Section B**, evaluation and assessment are dominant features, either explicitly or implicitly. All 15-mark questions lead candidates into some level of evaluation, and this was not always forthcoming. Level 3/4 responses are often differentiated through the detail and sophistication of the assessment.

The use of examples can do much to enhance an answer, even if not specifically required. Case studies can offer greater depth and detail than simple examples, but may, in themselves, not cover the range of ideas that a question demands.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Hydrology and fluvial geomorphology

Question 1

- (a) Apart from the variable quality of the diagrams, most candidates were able to identify and label relevant features.
- (b) Most candidates were able to explain the features labelled on their sketch maps with the drop in velocity and flocculation of clay leading to deposition being dominant. There were a few issues where candidates labelled features that were not present or related to a delta. A rational explanation of these features was then difficult.

- (c) Deltas are dynamic features changing with respect to varying discharges, varying sediment loads, and changes brought about by tidal currents and marine processes, storms, etc. Rising sea levels were also appropriate as a factor. Many of these factors were recognised by most candidates and, thus, full marks were often obtained.

Atmosphere and weather

Question 2

- (a) Candidates still experience problems when describing patterns. Many candidates described the movement of individual currents rather than the general pattern. All too often, the currents were described as moving up or down rather than north or south. Occasionally currents in both hemispheres were described rather than just those in the Northern Hemisphere.
- (b) This was the question that caused candidates most problems. The emphasis was on seasonal variation. Many candidates realised that the temperature of the currents could influence temperatures on the land that they passed but were not able to relate this to seasonal variations. Also, the currents on their own will not affect temperatures. The effect will be through winds as modified by the ocean temperatures. This link was often ignored. The major effects are in the winter for warm ocean currents and in the summer for cold ocean currents.
- (c) The same issue related to this question, although not to the same extent. The apparent movement of the sun and land-sea distribution were quite often discussed, although the influence on seasonal variation was often very generalised.

Rocks and weathering

Question 3

- (a) Many candidates were able to score both marks for parts (i) and (ii) although there was some confusion over the nature of feature B.
- (b) Many candidates achieved full marks and most candidates were able to obtain some marks. However, there was a tendency to provide an explanation rather than simply describing what was in the figure.
- (c) The detail in explaining the movement of material on slopes was encouraging. Many candidates are now aware of the role of pore water pressure in reducing the strength of cohesive materials as well as increased weight and lubrication. However, the question asked for the movement of material on slopes, thus it was not restricted to mass movement. Rainsplash, sheet and rill wash were also appropriate. These were often ignored.

Section B

Hydrology and fluvial geomorphology

Question 4

This was the most popular of the **Section B** questions.

- (a) (i) Only a small minority of candidates knew how to measure drainage density. Many thought it was related to the hydrograph.
- (ii) This was answered quite well but some answers lacked the detail to achieve full marks. The number of marks indicates the amount of detail required. Many candidates provided enough detail for two marks but not enough for higher marks.
- (b) There were many excellent answers to this question with both flows and stores being covered. Occasionally there was a tendency for the relationships between the nature of urbanisation and the effect on water movement to be less than detailed.

- (c) There were some excellent and detailed answers to this question. The only issue related to a definition of environment. Most candidates equated it with the natural environment and wrote about the effect of flooding on habitats and ecosystems. Pollution of river courses and its effects on the biota of river systems were often discussed. Other candidates took a broader view of environment and defined it as the human environment. This led to the argument that, apart from loss of life, river flooding affected everything about the environment. This was an acceptable interpretation as long as environment was defined at the beginning of the answer.

Atmosphere and weather

Question 5

This was a more popular question than in previous years and there were some excellent answers.

- (a) In part (i) most candidates were able to define both sublimation and convection, although the accuracy of the definition of convection was not as good as that for sublimation. This was to be expected as sublimation is a more clearly defined process than convection. In part (ii) most candidates achieved at least two marks. The role of condensation nuclei was often ignored as was the need for the minute water droplets to be maintained in the atmosphere.
- (b) The main issue with this question related to the need to answer it with reference to one urban area. There was a tendency to name an urban area and then not to relate any further discussion to that urban area. Thus, answers in reality became generic answers. What was required was knowledge of the specifics of that urban area and how those specifics affected temperature and humidity. The emphasis was on human activity and thus it was not just the nature of the buildings and infrastructure but the activity itself. This distinction was ignored by many candidates, but there were some sophisticated answers, with accurate and relevant detail about the chosen urban area and the effect of the urban characteristics on temperature and humidity. Vancouver and London provided the detail for the best answers.
- (c) There was a dichotomy of answers to this question with some very good and some which struggled with the concept of albedo and the diurnal energy budget. Few candidates were able to define and explain all the components of the energy budget and the role of albedo in influencing those components.

Rocks and weathering

Question 6

- (a) In part (i) carbonation was defined better than hydration. Hydration was often confused with hydrolysis. In many cases, however, the role of carbon dioxide in the carbonation process was often omitted. In part (ii) many candidates achieved full marks, although there were still too many references to hard and soft rock rather than to the rock type and its characteristics.
- (b) This was one question where a diagram or diagrams would help considerably. However, as noted earlier, the detail and accuracy of many diagrams were minimal. The description of ocean trenches was often poor with some being described simply as a dip in the ocean floor. This often detracted from the overall value of the answer. The process of ocean trench formation was known by most candidates.
- (c) There were mixed responses to this question. The quality of the answers depended on the chosen example and the detail provided. However, there were some really excellent and detailed answers. The coast at Lyme Regis and Hong Kong were the best specific examples, but the problems faced by slopes on unconsolidated material in California featured quite frequently. It was important to set the general scene with respect to the types of mass movements that were being reduced. Thus, the quality of the answers was in the detail provided.

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/12
Core Physical Geography

General comments

Answers were wide ranging in their quality and effectiveness. Many candidates displayed a sound understanding of the physical processes contained within the syllabus.

The use of English is often convincing, but candidates can be more uncertain when interpreting the demands of a question. Clarity of expression is a skill that many have developed, but not always clearly related to the questions themselves. Indeed, this quest for clarity could more often be achieved through the judicious use of illustrative diagrams, but this is a skill requiring further development. Questions involving plate tectonics, for example, would often benefit from diagrammatic support to enhance the answers, but this was not always forthcoming. Candidates should understand that illustrations and diagrams can do much to clarify explanations, even if not specifically required.

Few candidates failed to complete the required number of questions, although some left insufficient time to fully consider all possibilities in their **Section B** answers. Consequently, final evaluations were sometimes rather simplistic and suggest that planning in terms of time allocation still requires some attention. Nevertheless, there were few rubric infringements, and only a handful of candidates attempted more than the one specified question in **Section B**. These were generally the weaker candidates. Indeed, the experience of the last year suggests that the new format of the examination has been beneficial for most candidates.

All questions in **Section B** were attempted, but Atmosphere and weather continues to be the least popular of these optional questions. It is not surprising, therefore, that Atmosphere and weather also proved to be the weakest of the compulsory questions in **Section A**. However, there is some evidence that candidates are beginning to approach this topic more effectively than in the past, but the general level of competency still remains below that of the other topics.

A variety of 'command' words may be used in questions, but it is clear that 'define', 'assess/evaluate', 'describe' and 'explain' appear frequently. The latter two, in particular, continue to be too loosely applied by some candidates. For example, **Question 3(c)** required explanation in relation to mass movement, and statements of 'weathering' or 'vegetation' are not in themselves explanations. More detail is required. However, there were instances when detailed explanations were offered by candidates when only description was required.

The use of examples and case study material was effective. Candidates displayed detailed knowledge which they used relevantly, and which did much to enhance their answers. However, the use of diagrams was less effective. Explanations of the shape of storm hydrographs in **Question 1(c)** did not demand diagrams, but their use would have offered clarity. The same is true of **Question 5(c)**, where diagrams of the energy budget could be effectively used to discuss alternatives to reflected solar radiation. Diagrams were used by many candidates in both **Question 6(b)** and **Question 6(c)**. At times they could lack detail and accuracy, but they did clarify the text.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Hydrology and fluvial geomorphology

Question 1

- (a) Candidates understand storm hydrographs. It is a topic well taught and approached with enthusiasm. High marks were achieved by many, although some carelessly omitted the nature of the units in **(a)(i)**.
- (b) Most candidates displayed a clear understanding of lag time, but too many lost marks in completing the simple arithmetical calculations.
- (c) Many candidates used this question to display extensive knowledge of storm hydrographs, but answers were too often descriptive rather than explanatory, and also failed to focus on 'shape', as demanded by the question. As discussed earlier, effective diagrams could have considerably enhanced answers.

Atmosphere and weather

Question 2

- (a) Most candidates realised that the question was requiring description only, and there were some detailed and effective answers. Some answers were so detailed that they obscured more general aspects of 'pattern'.
- (b) This was a challenging question for most candidates. Many were unable to identify two separate ways in which ocean currents could influence temperature, but more significantly, did not link their answers to seasonal variations. Many were aware that winds and wind systems could influence temperature, but did not set their answers in a seasonal context.
- (c) Answers were more effective than those to **2(b)**, but once again did not sufficiently consider 'seasonality'. Many were familiar with the influence of latitude on temperature, and why low latitudes were warmer than high latitudes, but often did not develop their answers to incorporate seasonal variations. Furthermore, some candidates continue to discuss temperature variations in terms of distance from the sun, rather than the angle of the sun's rays and thickness of the earth's atmosphere.

Rocks and weathering

Question 3

- (a) Both parts of **(a)** were effectively answered by most candidates, who seem increasingly able to identify heaves, flows, slides and falls.
- (b) Many candidates found this difficult. A clear descriptive comparison was required in terms of the effects of mass movements, but many drifted into the causes of mass movements.
- (c) Candidates were aware of a wide range of relevant factors, but as identified in 'General comments', explanations were often little more than statements.

Section B

Hydrology and fluvial geomorphology

Question 4

This was the most popular question in **Section B**.

- (a) A few candidates did not clearly identify the difference between infiltration and percolation in **(a)(i)**, but many answers were clear and precise. In **(a)(ii)** there was a lack of focus on the question posed, and superfluous information was included on physical features and flood control generally.
- (b) Most candidates could identify the main flows, and descriptions were generally reassuringly competent, although some wrote about flows within the hydrological cycle rather than a river channel. Explanations were more confused, and too often drifted into landform creation.
- (c) The variety of examples was the strength of many answers, with Boscastle featuring prominently. Not all were clear what 'the environment' involved, and there was too much emphasis on the causes of river flooding. Nevertheless, there were some detailed and thoughtful answers.

Atmosphere and weather

Question 5

More candidates than usual attempted the Atmosphere and weather question.

- (a) This part was well answered. Most candidates clearly understood orographic uplift, condensation and fog.
- (b) This was very well understood, with a clear understanding of how human activity affects both precipitation and wind in urban environments, although very few actually linked these effects to the named urban area.
- (c) Many could identify a range of factors having a significant effect on the energy budget, and reflected solar radiation/albedo was certainly one of these. An appropriate diagram would have enhanced many of the answers, and a more detailed final assessment would have lifted more answers into high Level 3, or Level 4.

Rocks and weathering

Question 6

- (a) Most candidates found difficulty in defining sheetwash, but rainsplash was often carefully illustrated by effective diagrams. Candidates understood the purpose of netting in **(a)(ii)**, but answers lacked detail and range.
- (b) Descriptions were limited in detail. Most found explanations easier, particularly when supported by an effective diagram.
- (c) A relevant diagram was once again used by many candidates. This was very effective for landforms such as oceanic ridges and volcanic islands, but not for rift valleys, transform faults, etc. Discussion of 'the most significant factor' was lacking in many answers, and was reflected in the relatively few candidates who achieved Level 4.

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/13
Core Physical Geography

General comments

Answers were wide ranging in their quality and effectiveness. Many candidates displayed a sound understanding of the physical processes identified within the syllabus.

The use of English is often convincing, and clarity of expression is a skill that many have developed. The appropriate use of illustrative diagrams would do much to enhance this skill further. Questions involving plate tectonics, for example, would often benefit from diagrammatic support. Candidates should understand that illustrations and diagrams can do much to clarify explanations, even if not specifically required.

Few candidates failed to complete the required number of questions, although some left insufficient time for effective assessment in their **Section B** answers. Consequently, final evaluations were sometimes rather simplistic and suggest that planning in terms of time allocation still requires some attention. Nevertheless, the experience of the past year suggests that the new format of the examination has been beneficial for most candidates. Indeed, there were very few rubric infringements, and that was reassuring.

All questions in **Section B** were attempted, but Atmosphere and weather continues to be the least popular of these optional questions. It is not surprising, therefore, that Atmosphere and weather also proved to be the weakest of the compulsory questions in **Section A**, but the need to study this topic should improve the quality of answers in the future.

A variety of command words may be used in questions, but 'explain' featured frequently in this paper. This implies the need for more than a simple descriptive statement. Assessment and evaluation are important in **Section B**, and form essential constituent parts of answers to **Questions 4(c), 5(c) and 6(c)**. Without this focus, it is difficult to achieve Level 4.

The use of examples and case study material were generally effective. Examples of river flooding were often detailed and relevant, and Boscastle figured prominently in **Question 4(b)**. Examples chosen were usually appropriate, but there was a tendency for answers to become rather generic.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Hydrology and fluvial geomorphology

Question 1

- (a) Not all candidates were familiar with the concept of the diversion channel in **(a)(i)**, but methods of hard engineering were clearly understood in **(a)(ii)**.
- (b) Dams were the most popular type of engineering chosen, and answers were generally effective. Most candidates understood the need to store potential flood water, and to release it when appropriate.
- (c) Understanding of flood recurrence intervals was often too general. For many, it was simply how often floods occur, and therefore predicting flood risk, was at best, imprecise. Too few linked probability and scale.

Atmosphere and weather

Question 2

- (a) Not all candidates included the unit description in **(a)(i)**, but many did identify September in **(a)(ii)**. Some candidates were confused by the diagram.
- (b) Few considered length of daylight, but there were some effective answers discussing angle of the sun's rays, and the better answers produced effective diagrams. Distance from the sun still figures too prominently in many explanations.
- (c) Many candidates understood the tilt of the earth's axis and why temperatures are generally higher in low latitudes, but failed to extend the explanation to seasonal variations.

Rocks and weathering

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates correctly identified landslide.
- (b) Answers displayed awareness of the importance of the impermeable clay in reducing friction, but there was limited discussion of the structure of limestone.
- (c) Candidates usually identified the role of water in both reduction of friction and the addition of weight, but few went beyond simple statements in terms of developing their explanations.

Section B

Hydrology and fluvial geomorphology

Question 4

This was the most popular of the optional questions.

- (a) (i) This was answered well by most candidates.
 - (ii) There were some very good answers to this question. Waterfall retreat and gorge development were effectively described by many, although some drifted into detailed explanations which were unnecessary in this context.
- (b) The case study details were detailed and effective. Many chose either the Pakistan floods of 2010 or the more recent Bangladesh floods of 2017. A wide range of impacts were discussed.
- (c) Most candidates agreed with the assertion, and wrote at length on deforestation. Discussion of alternative factors, such as rock type and urbanisation, were less detailed.

Atmosphere and weather

Question 5

Few candidates attempted this optional question, so it is difficult to make definitive comments. Candidates seemed to understand radiation cooling, albedo, and orographic uplift in **5(a)**, but limited detail and understanding were displayed in **5(b)** and **5(c)**.

Rocks and weathering

Question 6

- (a) This was generally well answered. Candidates understood the role of vegetation in both reducing mass movement and influencing rates of weathering.

- (b) The explanation of global pattern of tectonic plates was understood in terms of both the classification of the types of boundary and the significance of convection currents within the mantle. However, the basic description of the global pattern was limited.
- (c) Most candidates could identify the important role of convection currents, and many identified both ocean/ocean and ocean/continental boundaries. However, discussion of alternative factors such as volcanic activity, faulting and subduction was more limited. Hence, it was difficult to reach a conclusion on 'how far do you agree'.

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/21
Core Human Geography

Key messages

Candidates should appreciate that the marks indicate the number of points expected, so candidates are unlikely to get, for example, 5 marks when they give a single undeveloped statement. Likewise, a 3-mark question should get an answer that takes half the time and answer lines of a 6-mark question. For example, answers to **Question 1(b)** should have been slightly more than half the length of **Question 1(c)**.

Candidates should read the whole question before answering it, as they often answered the next part of the question in the first part. For example, many explained the relative success of the population policy in **Question 4(b)** and then repeated this in **Question 4(c)**.

Fewer candidates struggled with **Section B** questions and there was little evidence of pressure due to a lack of time. Indeed, **Section B** questions were usually well answered with some effective exemplification and evaluation in **part (c)** answers. Candidates still need to appreciate that the last part of **Section B** answers are worth 25 per cent of the total mark. It is an evaluation and is therefore often the key discriminator, so they should leave sufficient time to do themselves justice.

Candidates should appreciate that where a question asks for two aspects (**3(a)**) and they give more than two, the best two will be credited. It is not good practice to do more than the number asked for and should not be encouraged as it wastes time. Equally, a number of candidates ignored the 'one issue' in **Question 3(c)** and 'one international migration stream' in **Question 5(c)**. Again, the best was credited. Quality of expression was sometimes reduced by the use of colloquialisms.

General comments

Candidates generally performed well on this paper, often lifted by effective **Section B** answers. Still too many candidates do not read the exact wording of questions. For example, **Question 2(b)** asked candidates to use evidence from Fig. 2.1, but many did not support their statements with evidence (i.e. data) from Fig. 2.1. This year there seemed to be significantly more candidates who did not directly answer the question set, especially in **Section A**.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Population

Question 1

- (a) Both parts were generally answered well but some candidates wasted time by listing countries. A significant number of candidates got **part (ii)** wrong.
- (b) Candidates struggled with this question and often resorted to listing countries with their calorie consumption rather than describing a pattern. Other candidates suggested patterns that seemed highly suspect such as 'Countries in the north have lower calorie consumption (under 3000) whilst countries in the south have higher calorie consumption (over 3000)' or 'Countries near to the coast have higher levels of calorie consumption'. Other candidates pointed out the west/east contrast or linked the pattern to the size of the country or level of development. Some candidates even linked it to altitude.

- (c) This was generally answered well but often there was a lack of detail and limited explanatory links to the development of the country. Typically answers resembled the following: 'With development incomes increase so people can afford more food so calorie consumption increases', but a more effective response was: 'Development leads to the creation of more highly paid jobs as industrialisation replaces subsistence farming so families can afford to buy more food or higher quality (higher in calories such as meat) food.' Candidates all too often offered vague generalisations such as: 'With development, technology develops which increases the output of food' which needed far more development. Many candidates ignored agricultural improvements and focused on the arrival of McDonald's and other fast food outlets that: '...helped fill up the population with high calorie sugars and fats leading to obesity.'

Population/Migration/Settlement dynamics

Question 2

- (a) All three parts were generally answered well but a significant number of candidates got **part (iii)** wrong.
- (b) Most candidates suggested rural-urban migration was indicated by the relative loss of working groups, both 31–45 and 16–30, the loss of young working males (or students), and that urban-rural migration was indicated by the influx of older groups, 46–60 and 61 and over. Candidates were required to give evidence from Fig. 2.1, so weaker responses resembled the following: 'The area has rural-urban migration as young people leave to find jobs in the city.'
- (c) This was a well answered question. Candidates built on their responses to the previous question to explain why younger, economically active residents might leave the rural settlement as older retirees might move into rural areas for peace and quiet or cheaper/larger housing. Other candidates looked at contrasting pushes and pulls offered by rural settlements or nearby urban areas. More perceptive answers looked at the role of improved road transport and government policy as possible reasons why simultaneous migration in and out of rural settlements has become easier.

Settlement dynamics

Question 3

- (a) The focus of this question was the identification of problems of urban living shown in the photograph. Many chose generic urban problems either not shown in the photograph, such as air pollution or traffic congestion, or chose a valid problem shown but then failed to link it to evidence in the photograph. More successful answers anchored their responses clearly to the photograph such as: 'Parking is a major urban problem especially for people in flats. In the photograph the car has been parked in a tiny and awkward space and could be subject to vandalism.'
- (b) Some candidates did not understand the term 'renewal' or saw it as 'adding more buildings'. Most candidates clearly understood why urban areas can undergo renewal, usually focusing on the upgrading of older decaying areas/brownfield sites, which are being run-down or polluted, or the creation of a new improved image – rebranding. Often answers were descriptive rather than explanatory: 'Newham in East London underwent urban renewal when much of the area was cleared for the 2012 Olympics.' But why did it need to be 'renewed'? Why did the Olympics need the site?
- (c) The question asked for one issue but many candidates offered more than one, so diluting their response. Many looked at the resulting socio-economic issues: 'Urban renewal often leads to gentrification and this in turn leads to friction between the old established population and the newcomers, who are often wealthier and younger.' The more effective answers supported their chosen issue with detailed examples.

Section B

Candidates often seemed to choose their question based on the nature of **part (c)** rather than reading all parts of the question. Too frequently, effective answers to **parts (b)** and **(c)** were let down by a weak **part (a)** answer where the candidate did not fully appreciate the wording of the question. Very few candidates attempted **Question 6**.

Population

Question 4

- (a) Many candidates did not fully appreciate the wording of the question. Terms such as 'recent' (within the last 40 years, i.e. not historical changes) and especially 'changes' (rather than current differences) were often ignored, so answers all too frequently resembled: 'Life expectancy is higher in HICs (e.g. UK 82) than in LICs/MICs (e.g. Kenya 60).' The key point is that the rise in life expectancy is now occurring across the world with the increase slowing in HICs at a high base but rapidly rising, from a low base, in LICs/MICs. This comparison needed some supporting evidence to be fully effective. There was no need to explain, but many candidates spent considerable time and answer lines doing so. Too many candidates simply gave lists of factors that caused high or low death rates.
- (b) The syllabus requires such a case study to be linked to natural increase but it was acceptable to consider those policies aimed at migration. Most candidates considered the one-child policy of China or the efforts of Japan to combat its ageing population structure. Many candidates considered a range of environmental, social and economic problems that led to the policy: 'Between 1959 and 1961 in China, the Great Famine killed at least 15 m people demonstrating there were too many people to feed from China's limited agricultural systems.' Weaker responses either looked at the problems caused by the policy (suggesting they had not read the whole question) or described the policy in some detail.
- (c) Candidates generally performed well in this part. Most offered balanced evaluations that demonstrated not only the economic gains but also the social losses, for example, from limiting childbirth in China, and supported these with some detailed examples. Weaker responses were either non-evaluative or lacked balance, seeing the policy as either all positive or, in the case of China, as all negative: 'China's one-child policy was an attack on equality and human rights as women were compelled to have only one child by a system of punishments (including compulsory sterilisation) and rewards such as free education for the child.' Higher level responses recognised that success is a relative term and could vary over time or location but also with different groups. In the case of China: 'The policy was very successful in the densely populated cities in the east of the country but less so in rural areas of the west where child labour was vital for working the small family farms.' Weaker responses tended to focus more on the features of the policy rather than its success. Candidates should always be aware that in some cases, such as this, **parts (b) and (c)** are linked so material should not be repeated.

Migration

Question 5

- (a) Candidates are required to study voluntary and forced (involuntary) movements under the heading of international migration. Most candidates clearly understood the differing natures of the two movements but were limited in their appreciation of their differing characteristics such as: age/sex profile of the migrants, socio-economic differences and journey length/direction – mode of travel. Most candidates focused on the relative push and pull forces that drove the two types of movement: 'Voluntary migration is a result of pull forces as people have a choice of where to go, whilst forced migration is a reaction to push forces such as war that repel them from an area.' This is a valid approach but candidates then tended to produce long lists of push and pull factors that rather lost focus on the characteristics.
- (b) The syllabus refers candidates to study the causes and patterns of international migrations including refugee flows. The pattern is variable but could have been simplified to LICs to MICs, tropical to temperate or insecure to secure areas. Many candidates ignored 'pattern' and described the movement of Syrian refugees to Europe with little attempt at explanation: 'Syrian refugees mostly move into neighbouring countries but many move on into Europe often seeking the more wealthy countries such as Germany or the UK.' A more effective answer was: 'There is a distance decay model for refugee movements. In the case of Syrian refugees they moved to the nearest 'safe' country but some countries further away offered to accept them so there was a higher than expected (by distance decay) number moving to Germany and Sweden.' Relatively few candidates explained the role that transport, government attitudes and existing contacts played in determining the pattern. The pattern also changes with time and operates often as a series of pulses. At times

there seemed to be some inaccurate appreciation of refugee flow numbers. Again, weaker responses demonstrated candidates had not fully read the question as the focus on refugees was absent, although some candidates gave example after example but ignored their pattern.

- (c) Candidates responded well to this question usually evaluating the impact of Mexicans on the USA or East Europeans on the UK. Impacts covered a range of economic impacts, e.g. cost to the economy, supply of cheap labour; social impacts, e.g. friction over housing, jobs, new foods introduced; cultural impacts, e.g. language, religion issues. The main discriminating factor was the level of evaluation and the recognition that the greatest impact (or whether it is positive or negative) could vary with location, level of technology, population density, volume/type of migrants, etc. Also it could vary over time – short-term vs long-term. Most candidates saw the economic benefits but also the social problems, although at times some unfortunate stereotypes were suggested. Some candidates considered impacts on both origin and destination, so wasting time and answer lines on irrelevant content.

Settlement dynamics

Question 6

- (a) This was a well known and understood topic for many of the very few candidates who attempted this question. A large range of characteristics were offered usually supported with some effective exemplification.
- (b) Candidates offered a range of factors that result in distinct zoning of functions in the CBD including: competition for the most accessible sites, e.g. bid-rent, complementarity – functions supporting each other, e.g. estate agents and legal and comparison activities, e.g. clothes shops. Others went on to consider historical factors, especially the location of cathedrals and castles and various government influences. Again, answers were often supported by well chosen and detailed exemplification.
- (c) The syllabus refers to ‘the changing CBD’ and ‘how urban locations change over time for retailing’. Most candidates argued that retailing was still in central areas, usually seen as the CBD, but that there had been a shift to urban fringe locations in retail parks mainly due to changes in transport. Answers were supported with detailed examples often based around the changing location of retailing in London or Birmingham. At times, some candidates saw ‘central areas’ as rather wider than anticipated. Some perceptive candidates considered the rise of online retailing as reducing the role of shops as sources of retailing or looked at a smaller scale by considering the changing nature of small market towns where local corner shops have disappeared and CBDs are in decline as out-of-town centres have been built.

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/22
Core Human Geography

Key messages

Candidates should appreciate that the marks indicate the number of points expected, so candidates are unlikely to get, for example, 5 marks when they give a single undeveloped statement. Likewise, a 3-mark question should get an answer that takes a little over half the answer lines of a 5-mark question. Candidates should read the whole question before answering it, as they often answered the next part of the question in the first part. For example, many gave reasons for the differences in the age/sex structures in **Question 2(b)** when only a comparison was asked for; reasons for the differences were required in **Question 2(c)**.

Some candidates struggled with **Section B** questions, possibly due to a lack of time. Candidates need to appreciate that the last part of **Section B** answers are worth 25 per cent of the total mark. It is an evaluation and is therefore often the key discriminator, so they should leave sufficient time to do themselves justice.

Candidates should appreciate that where a question asks for two aspects (**2(c)**, **3(b)**) and they give more than two, the best two will be credited. It is not good practice to do more than the number asked for and should not be encouraged as it wastes time.

Good case study knowledge is needed, especially in **Section B**, but it must be 'recent'. The syllabus indicates that 'case studies should be dated no earlier than 1980' and that those from 'within the lifetime of the student' are likely to be the most relevant and engaging. Case studies should also be appropriately applied to the question. Too many candidates simply repeated everything they had memorised about an example they had studied without applying it to the question properly, which made their answers lack focus.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Population

Question 1

- (a) Few candidates had any difficulty with this question.
- (b) A comparison was needed but some candidates gave two separate descriptions, and this limited their marks. No credit was given for simply repeating data – some development was required such as calculating the numerical differences between the two groups, changes in totals or percentage changes.
- (c) Many candidates ignored 'limit to the increase' and gave reasons for low calorie consumption.

Population/Migration/Settlement dynamics

Question 2

- (a) Few candidates had any difficulties with these calculations.
- (b) This question required a comparison, but many candidates wrote two separate descriptions which limited their marks. In addition, too few used data from the pyramids. A significant number wandered into explanation, which was asked in the following question **2(c)**. Good responses took specific aspects of each pyramid and made a direct comparison, for example, 'The pyramid for the

HIC settlement has a significantly higher percentage of the population aged over 61 than the LIC settlement'.

- (c) Very few candidates explained the differences between the pyramids in the context as described in the question – two urban settlements. Many gave generic answers about the differences in population structures between two countries and hence many answers were formulaic and stereotypical. Very few mentioned the impact of rural-urban migration in the LIC settlement that was clear in the resource.

Settlement dynamics

Question 3

- (a) Although most candidates were able to achieve 2 or 3 marks, the focus on the buildings was lacking in many answers. Some able candidates did not achieve full marks as they over-complicated their answers by giving elaborate descriptions of, or listing, the building materials or by giving explanations which were not required.
- (b) Most candidates were able to give a reason related to the low income/poverty of the residents and the cost of formal housing, but many were not able to give a second distinctly different reason such as the railway giving access to other areas of the city or discrimination in housing and employment.
- (c) Good responses explained a range of reasons for economic challenges, but many did not get beyond 'it costs a lot because there are a lot of them'. Some recognised a low tax base as another issue, but few went beyond these challenges. Many ignored 'economic' challenges and gave general descriptions of what needed to be done.

Section B

Population

Question 4

- (a) (i) There were many succinct and accurate answers, showing candidates had learnt an appropriate definition for this term. Most candidates explained the link between population and resources, but weaker responses included explanations such as 'so that people have the bare minimum' or 'providing just enough to survive' rather than explaining the idea of maximising the advantages of the resources for all the population. The best responses included ideas of sustainability.
- (ii) Most candidates were able to describe two consequences. Weaker responses gave a simple point, for example, 'there won't be enough food', whereas stronger responses gave some development. For example, 'If there are too many people there may be food shortages. This can cause malnutrition or, in extreme cases, starvation. Malnutrition also causes ill-health which affects the ability to work and this can lead to low productivity in the economy'. A number of candidates wrote a single account involving a number of consequences. It is good practice in these questions for candidates to clearly set out two different consequences, for example, giving each consequence its own short paragraph.
- (b) Many candidates did not have a clear understanding of the term 'constraints' or 'sustaining population' and wrote general accounts of population problems, which produced weak responses. These terms are specified in the syllabus and it would be useful for teachers to give a number of ways to explain these terms to help their candidates' understanding. For example, 'What factors make it difficult for a population to meet its needs?'. The syllabus refers to 'wars' and 'climatic hazards', and some responses recognised these, but the ensuing coverage mostly lacked any extended exemplification or linkage to sustainability impacts. Strong responses were able to do this and bring in other factors too. Many candidates wrote only about China's one-child policy, which had some merit but limited their response.

- (c) In responses where each term was understood correctly, many candidates were able to describe the differing issues of overpopulation and underpopulation, but most did not go on to discuss the degree of challenge presented by the conditions. Many candidates did not understand the term 'underpopulated', often confusing it with 'ageing population', and gave inappropriate examples such as Singapore or France which severely limited the marks available to them. Some candidates used the examples of Australia and Canada but were only able to give generic answers such as 'there are not enough people to use the resources.' Good responses were able to give exemplification such as 'In order to overcome this challenge, the Australian government has encouraged selective migration by providing visas to highly skilled workers and for immigrants with good standards of education'. Most candidates were able to describe the issues of overpopulation and the best responses were able to exemplify their answers with well chosen examples. The best responses drew examples from several countries to illustrate different points. Too many candidates wrote about policies to address over/under population without explaining difficulties they cause, with many of these attempting to make their case study of China's one-child policy fit the question, usually with limited success.

Population/Migration

Question 5

- (a) Most candidates were able to describe a range of reasons relating to distance decay, but weaker responses did not go much beyond 'it costs more and takes more time'. The question was not limited to international migration and there were some good responses that referred to internal migrations such as rural-urban or urban-rural.
- (b) Most candidates were able to explain a range of obstacles and barriers, although some reiterated things they had been credited for in **5(a)**. Many candidates referred to Lee's model which then gave them a good framework for their answer. Weaker responses gave simple descriptions of obstacles such as 'mountains and deserts'. Better responses added some general geographical detail such as 'migrants moving to Europe from Africa have to cross the Sahara and the Mediterranean Sea', whereas stronger responses gave more detail. For example, 'For migrants moving to Europe from Africa, the Mediterranean is a physical obstacle. Many end up paying traffickers, often in Libya, to make the crossing to Italy in small boats that are dangerously overcrowded.'
- (c) Many candidates did not fully understand the term 'constraint' and simply answered in terms of 'obstacles and barriers', often repeating those given in **5(b)**. Most responses explained how age constrains migration and discussed it in terms of young vs old, although there were many sweeping, and not entirely accurate, statements such as 'few people over 50 migrate because they are weak, ill and immobile'. Many answers were also very general, lacking specific exemplification but instead describing the likelihood of different age groups to migrate. Good answers were able to give relevant examples: 'Most of the people migrating from Eastern Europe to the UK (following the enlargement of the EU in the mid-2000s) were initially younger, in the 20–30 age group, because they had fewer ties at home and were most likely to find employment, but over time many have been joined by their families once they established themselves.' Stronger answers brought in other factors such as gender, social ties, level of skills/education. The question was not limited to international migration and there were some good responses that considered differing ages as a factor in rural-urban and urban-rural migration.

Migration/Settlement dynamics

Question 6

- (a) Many responses simply gave little more than push/pull lists with little explanation or exemplification, while better answers explained the process of counter-urbanisation in some detail.
- (b) There were many weak responses which described very general consequences, often in terms of urban decline rather than specifically about population decrease.

- (c) Many candidates showed confusion or lack of understanding about the term 'urban renewal'. There were basically two elements to this question:

urban problems, linked to
urban renewal schemes.

There were many weak answers that did not go beyond descriptions of general infrastructure improvements in cities or gentrification.

Strong responses clearly identified one or more well described urban renewal scheme(s) and assessed the extent to which they had addressed the urban problems they had attempted to solve. The redevelopment of London Docklands was a commonly used case study, but it was often hampered by being rooted in old case study material from the 1980s without bringing it up to date. Other well used examples were based on sport or culture-led regeneration such as the Olympics in London (2012) and Rio de Janeiro (2016 and linked with the World Cup in 2014), or the building of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao and the development of a new business district around the city's derelict docks.

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/23
Core Human Geography

Key messages

Candidates should appreciate that the marks indicate the number of points expected, so candidates are unlikely to get, for example, 5 marks when they give a single undeveloped statement. Likewise, a 3-mark question should get an answer that takes a little over half the answer lines of a 5-mark question. Some candidates struggled with **Section B** questions, possibly due to a lack of time. Candidates need to appreciate that the last part of **Section B** answers are worth 25 per cent of the total mark. It is an evaluation and is therefore often the key discriminator, so they should leave sufficient time to do themselves justice.

Candidates should appreciate that where a question asks for two aspects (**3(b)**) and they give more than two, the best two will be credited. It is not good practice to do more than the number asked for and should not be encouraged as it wastes time. Also, where a question asks for **either/or (3(c))**, then only one aspect should be addressed in the answer as only one will be credited.

Good case study knowledge is needed, especially in **Section B**, but it must be 'recent'. The syllabus indicates that 'case studies should be dated no earlier than 1980' and that those from 'within the lifetime of the student' are likely to be the most relevant and engaging. Case studies should also be appropriately applied to the question. Too many candidates simply repeated everything they had memorised about an example they had studied without applying it to the question properly, which made their answers lack focus.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Population

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates answered both parts correctly.
- (b) Most candidates found this straightforward and were able to describe income and calorie consumption giving data from the resource.
- (c) Most candidates were able to give good answers, but a minority did not cover both low and high calorie consumption and this limited their marks.

Population/Migration

Question 2

- (a) Most candidates answered both parts correctly.
- (b) Most candidates were able to describe a pattern, but some simply listed countries by proportions, which did not gain credit.
- (c) Many candidates answered this in terms of moving for education, which was one acceptable aspect, but did not consider other reasons such as how levels of education allow for greater opportunities, increased knowledge of destinations and the ability to overcome obstacles.

Settlement dynamics

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates were able to identify and describe the main land uses shown.
- (b) Most candidates were able to explain reasons, most commonly in terms of land value and accessibility. A significant number of responses gave general comments about tourism as a reason, which was not credited. A number of candidates wrote a single account involving a number of reasons. It is good practice in these questions for candidates to clearly set out two different reasons, for example, giving each reason its own short paragraph.
- (c) Most candidates did not go beyond the issue of cost, and gave very general answers, whether describing the challenges of providing either power or transport. For example, 'It costs a lot to build new roads.' The best answers described several challenges and the strongest responses were able to give some exemplification (most commonly Curitiba or Cairo). Many candidates gave a general answer that covered both power and transport, in which cases only responses relating to one aspect were credited.

Section B

Population

Question 4

- (a) Most candidates were able to give several reasons for links between the two.
- (b) Most responses tended to consider only pressure on health and education resources, which were both valid, but did not consider other issues such as the effect on dependency ratios or social and cultural issues. Exemplification was lacking and where it was used it was usually limited to generic descriptions, for example, 'Uganda has a youthful population, and this puts strain on resources and education. Class sizes are big in Uganda'.
- (c) Responses often focussed on the causes of decreasing death rates rather than linking decreases in death rates to overpopulation. Stronger responses considered wider issues of death rates, population and resources and brought in the ideas of Malthus and Boserup. Stronger responses also considered death rates as one component of natural increase together with birth rates.

Population/Migration

Question 5

- (a) Most candidates were able to consider the propensity of different age groups to migrate, but few were able to go into detail or give examples. The question was not restricted to international migration and some good answers considered urban-rural and rural-urban migration.
- (b) Weaker responses limited their explanations to the effect of distance on the cost of transport, whereas stronger responses brought in other factors such as the number of intervening obstacles increasing with distance and the effect of increased separation from family and culture. Some answers included aspects of internal migration and gave examples of people migrating from rural areas to nearby rather than distant cities.
- (c) The best answers gave a balanced response and considered factors that make international migration easier or harder than in the past, bringing in a range of factors such as transport (cost and availability), the increasingly globalised economy that provides economic opportunities and greater access to information through the internet. Good exemplification was seen, such as freedom of movement within the EU making migration easier for citizens of member countries or increased political barriers to immigration such as the US-Mexico border, migration within the EU and increasing political barriers such as immigration controls. Where exemplification was well applied, responses were good, but weaker responses tried to make the question fit their case study knowledge, for example, describing the difficulties faced by migrants attempting to get to the USA, without any assessment of how any level of difficulty has changed over time.

Population/Migration/Settlement dynamics

Question 6

There were insufficient responses to make comment.

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/31
Advanced Physical Geography Options

General comments

The response of candidates to this paper was generally encouraging with some very good answers to some questions. The resource based questions caused few problems except for **Question 4(a)**, where many candidates simply listed the landforms shown in the photograph rather than describing them. Also, in **Question 10** many candidates failed to use a diagram as stated in the question. These points are considered in greater detail when the individual questions are discussed.

The essay type questions all demanded an evaluation or a reasoned argument based on an assessment. Most of these answers would have benefited from a few brief sentences at the start of the answer outlining the issues that were being discussed. Conclusions should come at the end of answers rather than being anticipated at the beginning. Coastal environments and Hazardous environments questions were, as usual, the most popular. Tropical environments questions were the least popular and were problematic for some candidates. The responses to these questions are examined in greater detail below.

There were few rubric infringements and only an occasional candidate answered questions from more than two options.

The concept of sustainability, a key element in many questions such as **Questions 6** and **12**, is still not fully understood but there were encouraging signs that it is receiving more attention. Most candidates are aware that sustainability has environmental, economic and social strands. However, environmental sustainability is often downplayed. It needs to be remembered that environmental issues cannot be addressed satisfactorily if the physical geography involved is not well understood.

Comments on specific questions

Tropical environments

Question 1

- (a) The few responses to this question often failed to utilise the information provided in the figure. The pattern of winds was often incorrectly noted or the geography was very vague. The directions of winds were often wrongly interpreted.
- (b) Most candidates recognised that the movement of the ITCZ was crucial in the formation of the summer monsoon. But only a few were able to explain how the ITCZ, as it moved north, led to the intense rainfall that characterises the summer monsoon. The ITCZ brings with it intense uplift of air, which, in combination with intense evaporation over the Indian Ocean, leads to high rainfall amounts.

Question 2

This was the least answered question in this option. Those candidates who attempted it were aware of the various types of tropical karst landscapes. Most explained tower karst, but the better answers acknowledged that tower karst might develop from cockpit karst. Encouragingly, most candidates recognised that the position of the water table was important in the formation of tower karst. All three elements in the question were given good attention, although most of the emphasis was on rock structure and the role of water.

Question 3

This was the most popular essay question in this option. Although there were a few good answers, many answers showed little understanding of the nature of the climax vegetation in whichever tropical ecosystem was chosen. The tropical rainforest was the most popular choice of ecosystem. Some candidates paid little attention to the first demand in the question, namely to describe the vegetation characteristics of the chosen ecosystem. Many answers simply described deforestation as destroying the climax vegetation with little extra discussion as to how these human activities prevented the regrowth of the climax vegetation. Better answers did describe the plagioclimax vegetation with some discussion as to why it would be very difficult for a full climax vegetation to ever redevelop.

Coastal environments

Question 4

- (a) As noted in the introduction, a great number of candidates simply listed caves, arches, stumps and stacks without describing them.
- (b) Most candidates were aware of the possible sequence from cave to arch to stack and stump, but the explanation of the sequences was often very generalised. Thus, wave refraction was mentioned but not explained. Many candidates mentioned marine erosion but without the specific processes and how they operated. Simply listing hydraulic action, cavitation and abrasion was a description and not an explanation. The processes needed qualifying. It was important for the candidates to know what the processes were rather than simply listing them. Some candidates identified features that were not present in the photograph, even though they may have been expected to be shown.

Question 5

This was the least popular question in this option with a generally weak response. The range of depositional landforms covered was often limited to spits with a few simple statements with respect to tombolos and bars. Few candidates were aware of alternative explanations to some famous tombolos such as Chesil Beach in Dorset (driven onshore by rising postglacial sea levels). The question asked for the role of longshore drift in the formation of coastal depositional landforms. Thus landforms not formed by longshore drift also needed analysis. This was often ignored.

Question 6

This was the most popular question in this option. The detail in many answers was impressive and many excellent marks were attained. However, a few introductory statements outlining how sustainability was to be analysed would have benefited the answers. The better answers did differentiate between environmental, social and economic sustainability and used this distinction throughout their discussion and evaluation of strategies. The Holderness coast was by far the most frequent stretch of coast to be analysed and there were some excellent answers. However, even though Holderness was being discussed with separate localities analysed, quite often these localities were treated in isolation and their relationships and interaction were often ignored. Less integrated answers simply took individual locations to illustrate different strategies. Some stretches of coast were too large such as the entire east coast of North America. Some answers were purely generic with no case studies.

Hazardous environments

Question 7

- (a) There was a great deal of information shown on the figure and most candidates were able to achieve good marks.
- (b) Many candidates thought that the main fault lines, especially the Greendale fault, represented plate boundaries and argued for subduction of transform (conservative) boundaries. Few recognised that faults and earthquakes, although related to tectonic processes, are not in themselves plate boundaries. Some answers were wholly about subduction and plate convergence and failed to refer to any information shown in the figure.

Question 8

This was by far the most popular question in this option and received a good response from candidates. The detail in many answers was impressive with accurate reference to specific large scale atmospheric disturbances with dates, nature of hazardous effects and number of casualties. However, too many candidates described tornadoes, which are small scale atmospheric disturbances. The nature of the hazards, and thus specific risks, were often ignored as some answers were purely generic. Purely generic answers make it very difficult for a realistic evaluation of the issues to be made.

Question 9

There were some very good responses. Better answers recognised that prediction and preparedness relied on the recognition of the hazard and thus hazard mapping. Many candidates simply stated that hazard mapping was important without explaining what it was or how it might be developed. The recognition of past mass movement events is vital as the circumstances related to these events might enable other sites, with similar characteristics that had not yet failed, to be interpreted as possible sites of future mass movements. Also, many candidates seemed unaware that mass movement sites might be reactivated given the correct conditions and that these could be monitored with tiltmeters, pore water pressure measurement and even by sonar apparatus listening for developing signs of movement. Preparedness can include measures such as pinning, bolting, slope drainage, shotcrete, etc. The most popular specific examples used were based on Hong Kong.

Hot arid and semi-arid environments

Question 10

- (a) As noted earlier, many candidates failed to produce a diagram as asked in the question. The command 'With the use of a diagram' was often interpreted as 'by means of a diagram'. However, if the diagram had full description of the landforms, then marks could be awarded. There was a similar issue here as that with respect to **Question 4(a)**, namely a listing of the landforms rather than a description. Also, features were identified that were not present in the photograph.
- (b) This was answered generally well but sometimes lacked detail, especially the formation of the alluvial fan. The fact that the playa was once a lake was not realised by some candidates.

Question 11

There were very few answers to this question. The quality of the answers was generally weak with few detailed and accurate answers. Human factors involved in soil salinisation were usually ignored.

Question 12

In many cases, it was unclear whether hot arid or semi-arid environments were being assessed. This significantly weakened some of the answers. There was also some confusion as to which areas were hot arid or semi-arid. Although many commenced with a brief discussion of the problems faced by management, many answers discussed solutions without an introduction. However, there were some excellent answers with detailed accounts of a variety of management solutions. The variety of case studies was much greater than in previous answers to similar questions. Case studies from Jordan and Tunisia were a good addition to the usual studies involving the Sahel. It was good to note that in the discussion of the 'Great Green Wall' there was much argument as to its sustainability. Discussion of sustainability was also more prominent than it has been in previous years. However, as noted in the introduction, in some of the answers the discussion of sustainability was very generalised with little specific detail. Many answers were mainly generic and unrelated to any specific area or location.

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/32
Advanced Physical Geography Options

General comments

The responses of the majority of candidates were generally encouraging with some very good answers to some questions. The resource based questions proved accessible to almost all candidates, although **Question 4 (a)** exposed the difficulties of certain candidates to express their ideas clearly. **Part (b)** of the resource based questions gave candidates an opportunity to explain the patterns and trends identified in **part (a)**. This proved demanding in some cases with a tendency to generalise and simplify rather than focus on specific processes.

The essay type questions all demanded an evaluation or a reasoned argument based on an assessment. Most of these answers would have benefited from a few brief sentences at the start of the answer outlining the issues that were being discussed. Conclusions should come at the end of answers rather than being anticipated at the beginning. Coastal environments and Hazardous environments were, as usual, the most popular. However, both Tropical environments and Hot arid and semi-arid environments proved more popular than in recent series.

There were few rubric infringements and only an occasional candidate answered questions from more than two sections.

The concept of sustainability, in all its forms, was a key element in **Questions 2** and **6**. However, it is still not fully understood by many candidates and environmental sustainability is often downplayed. It needs to be remembered that environmental issues cannot be addressed satisfactorily if the physical geography involved is not well understood.

Comments on specific questions

Tropical environments

Question 1

- (a) Although a small proportion of candidates answered this question, most managed to use the resource effectively to describe changes in vegetation height, density and structure. Some commented on the change in the water table, but not all related this to the actual vegetation.
- (b) Most candidates recognised that seasonality and rainfall totals were significant factors in the patterns and trends evident on Fig. 1.1. However, only a small proportion of candidates could relate this to specific changes that were evident with increasing distance from the equator. The best answers used specific examples and integrated them into the response.

Question 2

This was the most popular essay question in this option. There were some very good answers from those candidates with a wide knowledge and a secure understanding of a case study. However, many responses were unbalanced with the problems of sustainable management hardly addressed in certain cases. Some evaluations were far too simplistic and lacked a full appreciation of the success or failure of the chosen case study.

Question 3

This was the least answered question in this option. Those candidates who attempted it were aware of some granite landforms but demonstrated an uncertain understanding of the role of weathering in their formation. In addition, other relevant factors such as the nature of granite and topography received little attention.

Coastal environments

Question 4

- (a) As noted in the introduction, many candidates found it difficult to express their ideas clearly and effectively. In comparing the information in Fig. 4.1, the candidates were seeking clear patterns and trends regarding the level of risk to coral reefs. The use of data was helpful for illustration and elaboration. However, a sizeable proportion of candidates merely described and stated the figures without identifying the patterns and trends.
- (b) Most candidates showed a reasonably sound knowledge and understanding of the conditions needed for coral growth. However, there was a significant variation in the quality of response when explaining how overfishing, pollution and physical damage posed threats to coral growth. Pollution was often referred to generically rather than specific types and sources.

Question 5

This was the least popular question in this section with a generally weak response. Many candidates concentrated on the formation of various depositional landforms without any clear assessment of the characteristics of the coastal sediments or their influence on the landform. However, most answers showed an understanding of the sources of sediments within a coastal cell.

Question 6

This was the most popular question in this option. Many responses were impressive and used detailed knowledge and understanding of case studies to illustrate ideas. However, a few introductory statements outlining how sustainability was to be analysed would have benefited the answers. Better responses differentiated between environmental, social and economic sustainability and used this distinction throughout their discussion and assessment. The Holderness coast was the most frequent stretch of coast to be used as a case study, although there was a wide variation in the accuracy of information given regarding locations, schemes and costs. Some coastal case studies were too large such as the east coast of North America and this tended to lead to a generic response with a distinct lack of precise detail.

Hazardous environments

Question 7

- (a) There was a great deal of information shown in Fig. 7.1, and most candidates proved adept at recognising several patterns and trends, ensuring a good mark. Weaker responses were far too general in their description with little reference to specific geographical regions.
- (b) Most candidates were able to achieve a good mark on this question. Many responses recognised that the distribution is largely governed by plate tectonics, especially destructive and constructive plate boundaries. There was good use of examples and diagrams to illustrate the global distribution of volcanoes.

Question 8

This was by far the most popular question in this option and received a good response from candidates. The detail contained in many answers was encouraging, with reference to specific earthquake events used to illustrate the hazards. Strong responses included specific examples of management strategies used in different geographical settings. A small proportion of assessments were too simplistic and failed to really recognise the power and unpredictability of earthquakes.

Question 9

Tornadoes are small scale atmospheric disturbances. Unfortunately, a significant proportion of responses concentrated on the much larger phenomena of hurricanes, cyclones and typhoons. This resulted in a substantial amount of irrelevant material. A few good responses used parts of the United States as an example of the latest methods of prediction, preparedness and monitoring with a realistic assessment of reducing the impacts of tornadoes.

Hot arid and semi-arid environments

Question 10

- (a) This question was generally answered well but sometimes lacked detail. However, most candidates were able to comment on the type, structure and density of the vegetation shown in Fig. 10.1.
- (b) Most responses indicated a sound knowledge and secure understanding of adaptations to aridity. The focus was clearly on the acquisition and conservation of moisture, with the better answers offering explanations rather than mere descriptions.

Question 11

Few candidates attempted this question but most of those who did recognised that landforms created by fluvial processes are essentially relict features. The better responses built on this by considering landforms resulting from current processes such as wind action and the modification of relict features as a result of present day processes. In many cases, the opportunity to use diagrams and specific examples was missed.

Question 12

A significant number of responses lacked a clear and detailed consideration of the global distribution of hot arid and semi-arid environments. However, most candidates recognised the significance of the descending limb of the Hadley cell without necessarily linking it to wind systems. A small proportion of answers offered a more detailed evaluation with factors such as cold offshore currents and continentality being considered meaningfully.

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/33
Advanced Physical Geography Options

General comments

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The concept of sustainability, in all its forms, was a key element in **Questions 2** and **6**. However, it is still not fully understood by many candidates and environmental sustainability is often downplayed. It needs to be remembered that environmental issues cannot be addressed satisfactorily if the physical geography involved is not well understood.

Comments on specific questions

Tropical environments

Question 1

- (a) Although a small proportion of candidates answered this question, most managed to use the resource effectively to describe changes in vegetation height, density and structure. Some commented on the change in the water table, but not all related this to the actual vegetation.
- (b) Most candidates recognised that seasonality and rainfall totals were significant factors in the patterns and trends evident on Fig. 1.1. However, only a small proportion of candidates could relate this to specific changes that were evident with increasing distance from the equator. The best answers used specific examples and integrated them into the response.

Question 2

This was the most popular essay question in this option. There were some very good answers from those candidates with a wide knowledge and a secure understanding of a case study. However, many responses were unbalanced with the problems of sustainable management hardly addressed in certain cases. Some evaluations were far too simplistic and lacked a full appreciation of the success or failure of the chosen case study.

Question 3

This was the least answered question in this option. Those candidates who attempted it were aware of some granite landforms but demonstrated an uncertain understanding of the role of weathering in their formation. In addition, other relevant factors such as the nature of granite and topography received little attention.

Coastal environments

Question 4

- (a) As noted in the introduction, many candidates found it difficult to express their ideas clearly and effectively. In comparing the information in Fig. 4.1, the candidates were seeking clear patterns and trends regarding the level of risk to coral reefs. The use of data was helpful for illustration and elaboration. However, a sizeable proportion of candidates merely described and stated the figures without identifying the patterns and trends.
- (b) Most candidates showed a reasonably sound knowledge and understanding of the conditions needed for coral growth. However, there was a significant variation in the quality of response when explaining how overfishing, pollution and physical damage posed threats to coral growth. Pollution was often referred to generically rather than specific types and sources.

Question 5

This was the least popular question in this section with a generally weak response. Many candidates concentrated on the formation of various depositional landforms without any clear assessment of the characteristics of the coastal sediments or their influence on the landform. However, most answers showed an understanding of the sources of sediments within a coastal cell.

Question 6

This was the most popular question in this option. Many responses were impressive and used detailed knowledge and understanding of case studies to illustrate ideas. However, a few introductory statements outlining how sustainability was to be analysed would have benefited the answers. Better responses differentiated between environmental, social and economic sustainability and used this distinction throughout their discussion and assessment. The Holderness coast was the most frequent stretch of coast to be used as a case study, although there was a wide variation in the accuracy of information given regarding locations, schemes and costs. Some coastal case studies were too large such as the east coast of North America and this tended to lead to a generic response with a distinct lack of precise detail.

Hazardous environments

Question 7

- (a) There was a great deal of information shown in Fig. 7.1, and most candidates proved adept at recognising several patterns and trends, ensuring a good mark. Weaker responses were far too general in their description with little reference to specific geographical regions.
- (b) Most candidates were able to achieve a good mark on this question. Many responses recognised that the distribution is largely governed by plate tectonics, especially destructive and constructive plate boundaries. There was good use of examples and diagrams to illustrate the global distribution of volcanoes.

Question 8

This was by far the most popular question in this option and received a good response from candidates. The detail contained in many answers was encouraging, with reference to specific earthquake events used to illustrate the hazards. Strong responses included specific examples of management strategies used in different geographical settings. A small proportion of assessments were too simplistic and failed to really recognise the power and unpredictability of earthquakes.

Question 9

Tornadoes are small scale atmospheric disturbances. Unfortunately, a significant proportion of responses concentrated on the much larger phenomena of hurricanes, cyclones and typhoons. This resulted in a substantial amount of irrelevant material. A few good responses used parts of the United States as an example of the latest methods of prediction, preparedness and monitoring with a realistic assessment of reducing the impacts of tornadoes.

Hot arid and semi-arid environments

Question 10

- (a) This question was generally answered well but sometimes lacked detail. However, most candidates were able to comment on the type, structure and density of the vegetation shown in Fig. 10.1.
- (b) Most responses indicated a sound knowledge and secure understanding of adaptations to aridity. The focus was clearly on the acquisition and conservation of moisture, with the better answers offering explanations rather than mere descriptions.

Question 11

Few candidates attempted this question but most of those who did recognised that landforms created by fluvial processes are essentially relict features. The better responses built on this by considering landforms resulting from current processes such as wind action and the modification of relict features as a result of present day processes. In many cases, the opportunity to use diagrams and specific examples was missed.

Question 12

A significant number of responses lacked a clear and detailed consideration of the global distribution of hot arid and semi-arid environments. However, most candidates recognised the significance of the descending limb of the Hadley cell without necessarily linking it to wind systems. A small proportion of answers offered a more detailed evaluation with factors such as cold offshore currents and continentality being considered meaningfully.

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/41
Advanced Human Geography Options

Key messages

Selection of a question should be based on the ability to address all aspects. This is particularly important for **Questions 3, 5, 8, and 11**.

Geography is a spatial science with candidates needing to understand the syllabus key concepts such as space, place, diversity and change. These relate to location, place, spatial pattern and spatial interaction. This is significant in **Questions 2, 3, 5 and 9**.

Adoption of an analytical approach enhances the evaluative element rather than content or knowledge based responses. This is important in **Questions 2, 6, 8, and 11**.

Scale is often required by the question as seen in **Questions 1b, 3, 4, 5, 7b, 8, 9, 11 and 12**.

General comments

Overall, candidates are well prepared for the two options with little evidence of selectivity within each option. Centres seem to be teaching the whole content, enabling candidates to be able to choose either of the two questions. There is some evidence that in the option Production, location and change, some centres may not be covering manufacturing industry and related service industry.

Candidates are generally balancing the time given to both the compulsory structured questions and the essay questions, with very few examples of incomplete questions. Some candidates would benefit from considering the number of marks allocated for **part (b)** of the compulsory **Questions 1, 4, 7 and 10**.

Understanding an ever-changing world from one's own viewpoint is not easy, but a syllabus which is trying to widen horizons should not simply confirm existing ideas of other regions, countries and peoples. It was noticeable that a sizeable proportion of candidates have a rather simplistic view of other countries, sometimes assuming that people in LICs are poor, uneducated and ignorant of what might be a better alternative. This is often especially noticeable regarding farmers – 'many people (farmers in LICs) fail to consider new organic farming techniques' or 'are unaware of the consequences of degradation' – or it is assumed that they are all subsistence farmers. Other countries were referred to as poor by candidates but, despite their problems, are categorised by the World Bank as middle-income countries. This simplistic view can also apply to indigenous peoples whose way of life was measured by some candidates solely on 'western scales'.

Comments on specific questions

Production, location and change

Question 1

- (a) Almost all candidates appeared familiar with a scatter graph with a best fit line and were able to describe the basic relationship as a positive or direct relationship/correlation. Data support for this relationship in many cases was not suitably chosen to illustrate both ends of the relationship. Examples such as Nuevo León and Oaxaca were expected or others which are on or very close to the line of best fit. Less noted was the fact that the relationship is weak or imperfect or that there is some variation such that the same rate of informal employment might have varying levels of percentage employment in agriculture or vice versa. Most candidates could identify clear anomalies

such as Chiapas with a higher employment in agriculture than indicated by the best fit line or Federal District, which shows the reverse.

- (b) Most candidates demonstrated a sound understanding of employment in the informal sector. The best answers suggested a range of reasons and noticed that the question is formulated at the country scale. Few used the resource from **part (a)** to recognise that the relationship of the data suggests that informal sector employment by agriculture may play a part in high employment in the informal sector. Though the syllabus includes 'informal sector' as part of the content in paragraph 11.3 Manufacturing and related service industry, labour would be considered as one economic factor in paragraph 11.1 Agricultural systems and food production.

Question 2

Candidates were invited to assess the extent to which they agreed or not with the statement that agricultural change does not benefit many people. Many had reasonable knowledge of exemplars of agricultural change and often used examples from their own country, region or locality. This is a sound way to provide content which is familiar to the candidates. The key to a successful response came from development of the assessment element of the question, reflecting the importance of the first key message. Many responses used a descriptive approach, illustrating several examples of agricultural change with limited assessment comment at the end of each paragraph or in the conclusion. Better responses started with an opening statement of the viewpoint of the candidate or of varying viewpoints which might follow considering both benefit and the numbers involved, and used fewer examples of agricultural change but analysed them with respect to the statement given in the question. The changes were very clear and were linked to benefits at varying scales from local, such as the farm/the holding or producer, and/or at the national scale. Some quite rightly looked at other agricultural and non-agricultural groups who may benefit from agricultural change.

Question 3

Responses were generally not strong but the majority did notice the fact that the question was about one country only. The first key message is important here, because many candidates did not focus on the issues faced by manufacturing industry in the chosen country. They presented instead a narrative or weaker description of changes in government policy broadly or, less commonly, focused on industrial policy for a country such as India or China. Better responses displayed clear knowledge of the issues faced and if a historical context was used, they assessed how far the issues were solved or not at each stage. When introducing new issues, they also considered whether these came from the initial issues/failings in industrial policy or were new issues.

Environmental Management

Question 4

- (a) The question and resource were generally very accessible for candidates. Most remained focused on the local scale as demanded by the question and were able to use evidence from the photograph to describe 'how the pipeline may impact the environment'. A small number of candidates gave no evidence of looking at the photograph while some made general comments like 'human activity would affect the environment' or 'this would impact or interfere with the ecosystem' rather than making specific links.
- (b) Most responses were able to consider two or more factors, although they did not necessarily have the context of an HIC. Better responses developed their points briefly such as explaining why energy security was important rather than simply mentioning it. The HIC context was covered with some of the following points: demand is high because of wealth, the use of a variety of high energy using devices in the home, industrial use, or in the transport, service or quaternary sectors. Others considered supply factors such as HICs having the capital and technological resources to exploit oil resources or contrastingly not wishing to exploit oil resources because their economic wealth gave them a choice to exploit other sources of energy more costly and/or environmentally friendly. Some candidates forgot this question was for 6 marks only and wrote an extended essay.

Question 5

This question was chosen infrequently, possibly because candidates recognised that the locational element was the major challenge for a successful response. Good responses usually had some mention of location of power production early on and made policy changes very clear from the start. These responses were then able to link changes in the management of energy supply, such as cleaner production and/or move to renewable sources of energy, to clear locational changes. For the former, the location of production might have stayed the same with adaptations, for example, technological changes such as cleaner emissions or conversion to a different fuel type, and might have involved replacement of 'dirty' production units by new cleaner units. In the latter case, knowledge of the location and changes in location of renewable production was sometimes enhanced by knowledge of specific examples of HEP, wind or solar production. A key element here was to draw this knowledge out to generalised change across the chosen country. Many candidates knew about the location of a new source such as a specific HEP production location but were unable to develop this to sites along other rivers or indeed the same river.

A few considered the importation of energy sources linked to the management aspect of energy security but were unable to link this to location or changing location of power production. Very few of the responses seen were able to consider how extending or improving supply in remote or rural areas was being tackled and missed opportunities to consider smaller scale use of cleaner technology. Weaker responses often simply described the recent evolution of energy management or just described the current situation regarding energy mix. The locational element was either briefly mentioned or ignored and certainly the idea of changing locations was not addressed.

Question 6

This was a popular question but was not necessarily more successful. Most candidates chose to use examples of degraded environments, both rural and urban, and to follow the syllabus in terms of the factors involved: overpopulation, poor agricultural practices or deforestation for rural environments, and urbanisation, industrial development or inadequate waste management for urban environments. Thus, many factors were presented. Selectivity from this wide range of factors and environments was a key element behind a successful response and was based on the ability to deconstruct the question and plan a response with the necessary evaluative element addressing how far population pressure is a cause behind these more general factors of degradation and to what extent it is the main cause.

Some exceptional responses focused on one environment and planned a detailed response which answered the question. Those who described a variety of almost mini scenarios without analysis and/or without evaluative comment to answer the question were often less successful, unless there was a strong concluding assessment. Good responses were able to demonstrate an understanding of what population pressure is and frequently considered the balance between population, its growth and resource availability linked to concepts such as carrying capacity and concepts such as overpopulation, displaying links with their AS studies. Strong responses were also able to consider both the importance of population pressure as a cause of degradation in their chosen environment(s) as well as one or more other causal factors, and gave due consideration to the population pressure element. When discussing population pressure, they specified reasons why increases in numbers are often linked to environmental degradation, but high numbers or an increase in numbers are not always necessary for this to occur.

Weaker responses tended to describe and possibly explain environmental degradation but without much consideration of the link with population pressure or they concentrated more on other factors at the expense of population pressure. Some used population pressure as a catch-all, even though what they were describing were factors such as government policy or the lack of it, inability to avoid short term decisions because of poverty or greed or miscalculation on behalf of certain groups such as oil companies. Pollution and deforestation were at times thought of as the sole cause without considering what lay behind them. It was good to see that instances of use of social environments in urban areas which did not answer the question were few. Centres have noted the need to focus on environmental degradation.

Global interdependence

Question 7

- (a) Most candidates found the data to be very accessible and were able to succinctly describe the relative importance of direct spending by tourists to the contribution of tourism to world GDP. They noted that it was the second largest contributor, behind the purchases of domestic goods and services directly by the tourist industry, working out the difference of 6.3 per cent or by quoting the values of both contributors and making a further comment of relative importance. This may have been a comparison with the other three types of spending in total being lower, by calculating the contribution of direct spending by tourists to overall world GDP of about 3.1 per cent or noting that the overall contribution was just under one third. Some candidates could not achieve 3 marks because they simply repeated the figures from the table or tried to write a short essay about direct spending which could not be credited.
- (b) Better responses addressed the first key message, considering the ideas of: dependence (not just tourism being present), economic development and the country scale. Economic development and dependence were often successfully considered together such as: as dependence on one sector of the economy, which itself is subject to a variety of risk factors, leads to the neglect of development of other sectors of the economy where there are fewer temporal variations in earnings. Weaker responses targeted only numbers and/or earnings from tourism at the expense of other aspects of the economy. Sometimes these responses described a variety of circumstances which lead to the same result: smaller numbers and less tourist spending. It is possible here that candidates see the need to include as many examples of places, events, etc. as they can which is why the third key message is important. Additionally, examples can include in this case disadvantages related to economic development. Some candidates included environmental or social disadvantages, which may arise from dependence on tourism, but these needed to be made relevant to economic development to raise the response to a higher level. Seasonality was often mentioned but rarely developed in terms of economic development. Such development might have noted that, if the funds raised from tourism are not properly managed, then it can cause deprivation during the 'off-season', which means that funds for development of other aspects of the economy are not available.

Question 8

A major distinguishing feature of better responses was that they specifically discussed global patterns of trade in relation to how far they are influenced by historical and other factors. These responses were based upon sound knowledge of global patterns of trade. Some aspects of global patterns of trade seen include: most trade is conducted by HICs and is mostly between HICs; world trade is dominated by a few countries; share of global trade by HICs is dropping as trade by LICs and MICs increases; BRICs such as China and India are rapidly growing economies and are growing in importance as export nations; MINT nations are large exporters of manufactured goods; the most traded commodity is crude oil; the most traded manufactured goods are cars; three regions are responsible for more than 80 per cent of global exports – Europe, East and South Asia, and North America. Most candidates began by considering the role of historical factors with colonialism as the main factor seen in responses. They argued that colonialism established a pattern of trade of colonies exporting raw materials and agricultural products, and colonisers exporting manufactured goods, with some referring to trade dependency and terms of trade for colonised countries. Many exemplified this pattern through examples such as the UK with its Commonwealth countries or France's relationship with its colonies. Some developed this point to include valid comment such as the UK and France still having a significant import/export relationship with these countries. Few, however, could develop this point to clear global patterns of trade such as: the trading relationship between Europe as a whole and Africa where around 38 per cent of Europe's imports and exports are with Africa and still very much represent the pattern of trade in primary/secondary goods previously established.

Some candidates widened the scope of historical factors to include relationships established for different reasons exemplified by that between the USA and the UK. Having considered historical factors, most candidates turned to other factors such as resource endowment, locational advantage, comparative advantage, trade agreements and, less commonly, changes in global markets. Links between these factors and global patterns of trade were variable but this again was a distinguishing factor between more successful and less successful responses. The latter became largely descriptive in nature such that some responses displayed characteristics of more than one level, with the coverage of historical factors more closely linked to global patterns of trade, at a higher level. Sometimes candidates mentioned aspects of global patterns of trade but were unaware of their relevance. For example, trade blocs encourage trade between members, but

candidates were not aware that this is an element of global patterns of trade when the large number of trade blocs is considered. Some candidates noted that there is an historical element to some of these factors. Scale was sometimes an issue with comment at the level of single countries or trade between two countries only. A second distinguishing characteristic of better responses was the ability of candidates to consider the evaluative aspect of the question by assessing the extent to which global patterns of trade are influenced by historical factors. Some did this in the introductory stage of the response by stating that the influences are complex and often interlinked, and then by continuing to follow this analytical approach rather than a compartmentalised, knowledge-led approach, where comment was simple at the end of each paragraph or through a conclusion. Overall success in this question was largely dependent upon whether candidates had sufficient knowledge of a range of aspects of global patterns of trade, and illustrates the importance of the first three key messages.

Question 9

The desired focus on a tourist area or resort was mostly followed by candidates. Some candidates, however, use a country as their case study which sometimes has several tourist areas. This approach may be valid but where candidates describe the same impacts for each area, the assessment element of the response loses out. Most candidates considered both positive and negative impacts, and used examples of environmental, social and economic impacts. They recognised that impacts changed over time often in different ways, for example, social impacts changed from positive to negative, while economic impacts remained positive. These examples allowed some evaluative comment to follow or be included in an on-going way. Better responses had clearly defined time periods to compare and were well founded with accurate historical details illustrating the development of the destination. They presented some detailed information about their chosen area/resort, which reflected a sound sense of place. They also considered the nature and extent of the impacts and often separated these out into those which benefited and those which did not. In some cases, however, there is confusion over what is meant by the 19th and 20th centuries. Weaker responses simply mentioned impacts increasing or decreasing or even largely ignored the need to consider change. Some of these responses were largely generic, even when a named example was given, and some of the examples were not relevant to the named area. Those who applied the Butler model were not always able to relate specific stages to their example or were largely descriptive in nature or became generic. A few chose unsuitable areas which limited their scope in time or impact, such as Antarctica.

Economic transition

Question 10

Overall, candidates responded well to both parts of the question with commendable ability to describe pattern in **part (a)** and by demonstrating how they could apply their theoretical learning to unfamiliar data in **part (b)**.

- (a) This question proved straightforward for those candidates used to interpreting maps and able to identify and describe pattern. Better responses had a clear language of qualification, indicating higher and lower percentages with reference to compass directions and/or country borders, and they identified the overall pattern of decline south to north or with distance from the border with India. Weaker responses quoted certain values of RAI without indicating actual pattern or without qualification such as 'high' or 'low'.
- (b) Many candidates were able to recognise that higher values of RAI were likely to be linked to greater development levels. Although familiarity with the index was not necessary, some candidates made a simple assumption that all high areas were urban and low areas rural. Stronger answers were able to link better road access to processes of development (sometimes mentioning the multiplier or cumulative causation) which led to areas of success. More isolated areas, on the other hand, could not achieve this process, which led to less development and the development of regional disparities. Some used the core-periphery concept linking this to the relative ease of movement, or flows of people, capital and resources suggested the pattern of the rural access index. Less successful responses used only opposites for the more or less developed regions, or they focused on either the more or the less developed regions.

Question 11

Many candidates appeared to have little actual information about NICs or assumed that they had very poor economies before the intervention of TNCs in their economies, and thus presumed that this was the major or only factor in the emergence and growth of NICs. Those candidates who could distinguish the emergence phase as well as the growth phase tended to produce stronger answers. Some candidates did not see that emergence referred to early development rather than more recent growth. The best responses tended to recognise that there was a need to have balance between the NIC and TNC and had detailed information about the development of at least one NIC. They may, for example, know that Malaysia's emergence was heavily dependent on traditional exports such as oil and gas and that it was achieved largely through government investment. They may also realise that South Korea's chaebols were not originally TNCs and only became so later. Many sound responses had some idea about the role of government, infrastructure, national savings and education in NICs in general or for a specific example, and so were able to develop the evaluation of the role of TNCs in the emergence and growth of newly industrialised countries. Less strong responses wrote mainly about TNCs and general advantages and disadvantages in other countries, even in HICs. They often thought of TNCs as all powerful and able to turn around any economy in which they invest, although disadvantages were often mentioned in general. They often failed to recognise the global situations as well as the national characteristics which enabled them to have a large role in the development of some NICs. They may only have knowledge of certain NICs (often China) as they are now rather than including pre-conditions necessary for transformation into a NIC.

Question 12

This question was less popular than **Question 11** but was not necessarily less successful. Candidates who had a clear idea of the concept of cumulative causation (and sometimes its link with the multiplier effect) were likely to be able to apply it successfully in one or more contexts and consider the role of other factors behind regional divergence. Better responses used the concept of cumulative causation to explain the growth especially of core regions, but also at times to relate spread effects to the development of other areas such as alternative cores or growth poles. Some also referred to the reverse multiplier occurring in some previously economically strong regions. The best responses considered other factors, such as initial advantages and disadvantages and government policy and investment, and so could evaluate the importance of different factors. One strong answer made the point that, where spread effects are strong (usually aided by government policy) then social divergence (standards of living) was not as pronounced. Weaker responses had some idea about core, backwash and divergence but were not able to relate the concept of cumulative causation well. At times, candidates have a faulty understanding of spread effects, confusing them with backwash. Some candidates had quite a sound understanding of the theoretical concept but struggled to relate this to specific areas. Too often knowledge of countries experiencing divergence was extreme or very partial, such as the UK's core being London and the rest of the country undergoing decline. Some simply described the divergence with little explanation and no real assessment of factors. A few considered initial advantages/disadvantages to be all part of the concept itself or they associated the development and persistence of cores only with FDI. Discussion of convergence was often not related to cumulative causation or the reduction of divergence.

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/42
Advanced Human Geography Options

Key messages

This was the third sitting of the newly structured examination and candidates seemed comfortable with the new structure. Candidates choose two from the four different options. Within these options is a compulsory two-part question, worth a total of 10 marks, and candidates then choose one essay question from two options, worth 20 marks.

Teachers should continue to teach all content within each option. Sometimes, where candidates have a favoured part(s) to the option, the structured question may have a focus on another part of the option or the essay choice might not match with content selected by the teacher or candidate.

For the compulsory question, **part (a)** is point marked about a resource, with clear allocation of skills marks. **Part (b)** is assessed by three levels and is along the same theme as the resource, but not necessarily using the resource.

The optional choice of essay is levels marked – Levels 1–4. Quality planning of a response may take time but enables candidates to focus on the assessment objective Evaluation (AO4).

Regarding dated content, the syllabus states ‘... Where possible, case studies should be dated no earlier than 1980...’ This date is suggested so that the case studies are relevant and engaging to candidates. Where examples are taken before this date, it is suggested that they are reviewed or summarised along the lines of ‘pre-1980 a range of measures were attempted but they were largely successful or not’.

Any question which includes a type of factor requires other factors to be included in the response. The style of this question will be unfamiliar to some candidates, so should be practised by centres.

General comments

It was good to see that candidates made very good use of the data presented to them. Many candidates scored well on the point marked **part (a)** questions; however, it is worth noting that development of one point could only reach a maximum of 2 marks. Some candidates need to write more broadly about the data they are presented with. Comment about the main feature of the data/overall trend/pattern/impression is always useful, with specific data to back this up, and anomalies, if present.

In the **part (b)** answers, those which achieved Level 3 gave examples and addressed all parts of the question being asked. If candidates chose to use the figures in their answer, copying is given no credit, so candidates need to ‘do something’ with the information given to them, either by giving explanations for what they see or making comparisons between highest and lowest figures, trends or places on a map, etc.

On balance, candidates were well versed in appropriate geographical concepts and had learned some suitable examples.

For the essay questions, the better responses structured the whole essay as an assessment (a Level 3/4 response); some provided assessment in the introduction and the conclusion (a Level 2/3 response); some omitted it or made a simple statement (Level 1).

The best responses do more than take a narrative approach of learned content and apply knowledge and understanding to the question being asked. Examples should be used throughout and these can vary from places, strategies, techniques, methods, policies, etc. Weaker responses were, as ever, reliant on

description of specific situations and laid insufficient emphasis on evaluation and assessment. In many cases the evaluation was inferred or placed in a simple conclusion.

Candidate performance could be enhanced by using time well, such as in choosing carefully which questions to answer, by reading both in full and thinking about and planning the responses before starting. As essays carry 20 marks, they should take more time and be longer than the responses to **parts (a) and (b)** which carry 10 marks.

Comments on specific questions

Production, location and change

Question 1

- (a) This was generally done well, with most picking out the overall pattern. Most candidates used data and compass directions to describe location well. A small number did not use the data, simply using 'higher' or 'lower'. Some candidates lost marks as they tended to describe what was shown on the map, but failed to describe the pattern.
- (b) There were some good answers suggesting a good working knowledge of the informal sector. Most saw the difficulties of recording hidden activities and most also saw that evading authority (especially tax authorities) is a significant factor along with the illegality of some of the activities involved. Most of the candidates suggested the fairly obvious points about a lack of government data, not being part of the tax system, or people not wanting to divulge information. Some then went on to make thoughtful points about seasonality, temporary work, criminal activity or the position of women in relation to employment.

Question 2

In most cases candidates showed a reasonable understanding of both physical and economic factors. The quality of responses was often dictated by the level of detail and the use of examples. At the lowest level, candidates tended to agree with the statement and used examples of more extreme environments where physical influences might be more dominant. However, there were a number of sophisticated responses where there was a clear discussion, often bringing in economic factors and how these can modify physical conditions and how technology is playing an increasing role in food production. Examples of the Green Revolution and irrigation schemes were frequently the vehicle for this type of discussion. The focus was more often on production rather than land use, although this did not appear to impede answers. A number used Von Thunen as an idea, with varying levels of success. Where this dominated the discussion, the answer tended to lack a contemporary awareness of the question.

Question 3

Candidates appeared to find this question challenging, often resorting to simply describing change and referencing government policy in relation to encouraging economic diversification. Many chose India as the example, and demonstrated a lot of good 'historical' knowledge of India's post-Independence industrialisation policies. Answers tended sometimes to be overly descriptive with insufficient emphasis placed on assessing the success of these policies, especially the most recent ones. In this context, answers frequently lacked a focus on manufacturing and simply became a general description of national policy. The consequence of this was that a number of candidates drifted away from the key aim of the question, bringing in broader aspects about trade and globalisation and the growth of outsourcing in India. In most cases there was creditworthy material but answers generally lacked the focus required to achieve the highest marks.

Environmental management

Question 4

- (a) This was generally well answered. Perceptive candidates used the photograph effectively to produce 'local' answers. However, merely restating text shown on the diagram is a low level skill that cannot be rewarded. Candidates need to be encouraged to develop the information given to them.

- (b) Answers provided a wide range of environmental problems depending on the scale chosen and the type of biofuel with which the candidate was most familiar. Many described soil landscape degradation in its many forms as a critical issue; others, on a more global scale, saw the impact on global climate through deforestation while some saw the growing of biofuels as a threat to food security. A few candidates took this further by identifying threats to water systems. In most cases, differentiation was a result of the extent to which candidates simply offered a list or developed their ideas by offering some degree of explanation.

Question 5

The quality of responses was generally dictated by the examples chosen. Those candidates who used Norway or Iceland generally produced thoughtfully documented responses which were clearly evaluative. In many cases, these answers had considerable detail and were effectively used to show a sound understanding of energy security and had a clear discussion about energy policy and the trend towards the use of renewables. A number of candidates took this further by including observations about how the per cent use of renewable energy in the energy mix is partly dictated by the physical resource base, and how population related demand will also play a part in the extent to which energy demand might be satisfied by renewables in the future. Unfortunately, a significant number of candidates used inappropriate examples or no specific examples. Some were inevitably attracted to the Three Gorges Dam in China, despite the answer being restricted to HIC. This was a pity because often they had a sound understanding of the question and with appropriate examples would have achieved a very creditable mark.

Question 6

This was one of the most popular questions. A wide range of 'degraded' environments were used. The more popular were related to harsh environments being affected by desertification, river environments being affected by industrial and urban growth and areas of urban decay. Specific examples included those from the sub-continental (as in the case of Namibia) or the local (Macau) and the unusual (as in the degradation of nuclear testing sites in Australia). Very small scale examples were a little self-limiting since the causes were limited as indeed were the management attempts, with the result that the answers were rather thin. The success here was in the management and an evaluation of the management. Answers ranged from the largely descriptive and historical (London Docklands), which were generally self-limiting, to more contemporary examples where there was a clear understanding of improvement strategies. This approach generally lent itself more successfully to evaluation since it allowed a more logical way through the essay – 'these are the causes', 'this is what has been attempted', 'these are the results of the attempts to improve the area'. If candidates can identify a clear journey through any of the evaluative questions, they have a sound plan which will inevitably lead to the possibility of both ongoing evaluation and a clearly evaluative conclusion.

Global interdependence

Question 7

- (a) This question was generally answered effectively with most candidates able to identify both the positive relationship and possible anomalies. A number of candidates failed to fully develop points and make their answer secure by not using the data, while a very small number simply repeated the data, country by country, with only a marginal attempt to identify any relationship.
- (b) A wide range of ideas was expressed in response to this question, most of which had some merit. The major point of differentiation was the level of explanation or development. In some cases, candidates would have been better to have focused on three or four points and offered reasons (as requested in the question) why they may be significant rather than including an extensive list of ideas which subsequently offered limited individual development. The emphasis was on level of economic development, the range of attractions and ease of access. Some made very appropriate reference to political situations, using both examples from Figure 7.1 and others from around the world to illustrate.

Question 8

This question was generally done well, with candidates showing a good level of understanding. Those who took a balanced view by considering different types of aid, including short term emergency aid and development aid, often produced thoughtfully evaluative answers, especially when appropriate examples were used. There was excellent use of some NGO-sponsored examples of aid, while tied aid examples such as the Pergau Dam and other 'top down' infrastructure projects were used well. Those who took a more one-sided view at times appeared to have made a judgement and then looked for examples to justify their judgement. A small number of candidates appeared to be slightly unsure about what constitutes aid and included observations about investment or TNC involvement. Debt relief as a variety of aid was acceptable. There was both widespread knowledge and perceptive evaluation in some of these answers.

Question 9

This was another very popular question where the majority of candidates showed a good general understanding, and in most cases brought in appropriate case study material at a range of scales. In some cases, answers were rather too descriptive, often highlighting the pressures and issues created by the growth of tourism without fully exploring the question of sustainability. Those candidates who used examples effectively to discuss both environmental and economic sustainability generally produced sound answers. In many ways it was a question of selecting the best example to fit the question rather than trying to mould a learned example to fit the question, which was evident in some answers. Good responses defined sustainability at the beginning and then explored how the example related to the three dimensions.

Economic transition

Question 10

- (a) The majority of candidates recognised that the ACT had a higher ranking and highlighted this by observing the relative number of top measures. However, the emphasis was on comparison and often that did not come through. Too many merely described where ACT and NT were in the table. Some candidates struggled at times, quoting data that was inaccurate.
- (b) This appeared to be the most challenging of the **part (b)** questions and few candidates produced a clear Level 3 answer. A reasonable number identified the idea that not all information can be gathered by using statistics and that some information may be more subjective. However, they did not always get far beyond this by considering specific data (from Fig. 10.1) and addressing the idea in the question about 'why a combination of statistics and surveys' is often required. Weaker candidates struggled with this or simply left it out.

Question 11

A significant number of candidates were able to consider global shift, particularly in relation to manufacturing. The use of specific companies (Nike, Dyson and Apple were popular options) often helped in the examination of this trend. A number of candidates took this further by examining how some Asian countries are now outsourcing to other cheaper locations, showing a clear level of contemporary thinking and expressing the dynamic nature of globalisation. In many cases, answers were expressed through an understanding of TNCs and how they have developed, both in relation to reducing costs and responding to changing markets. A small number of candidates used the rapid economic change in China as an example, often with a sound appreciation of how China is expanding its economic dominance by investing in countries throughout the world or by using the example of how Chinese business is expanding rapidly in parts of Africa. A small number of candidates were slightly side-tracked by the idea of 'impact' expressed in the question and drifted into ideas about problems (impacts) of industrial decline or the environmental and exploitation issues associated with rapid economic growth in developing regions.

Question 12

It was evident that candidates appeared to know a great deal about regional inequality and were able to consider the reasons why such inequalities exist. It was good to see that many candidates began with Myrdal, Friedmann and economic modelling, as this helped the planning of the essay. Commonly used examples were Canada, China and the UK. Canada and China were often used to good effect, the UK less so with ideas often rather simplistic, out of date or not always accurate. Having established the regional differences, candidates generally then went on to consider government strategies designed to reduce inequalities and offer some appreciation of their effectiveness. This approach had varying levels of success

because it did not always reflect on the key idea expressed in the question, which was about 'why addressing regional development is difficult'. Those candidates who did address this idea often produced thoughtful and perceptive answers; those who did not generally produced somewhat descriptive accounts of regional problems and policies.

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 9696/43
Advanced Human Geography Options

Key messages

This was the third sitting of the newly structured examination and candidates seemed comfortable with the new structure. Candidates choose two from the four different options. Within these options is a compulsory two-part question, worth a total of 10 marks, and candidates then choose one essay question from two options, worth 20 marks.

Teachers should continue to teach all content within each option. Sometimes, where candidates have a favoured part(s) to the option, the structured question may have a focus on another part of the option or the essay choice might not match with content selected by the teacher or candidate.

For the compulsory question, **part (a)** is point marked about a resource, with clear allocation of skills marks. **Part (b)** is assessed by three levels and is along the same theme as the resource, but not necessarily using the resource.

The optional choice of essay is levels marked – Levels 1–4. Quality planning of a response may take time but enables candidates to focus on the assessment objective Evaluation (AO4).

Regarding dated content, the syllabus states ‘... Where possible, case studies should be dated no earlier than 1980...’ This date is suggested so that the case studies are relevant and engaging to candidates. Where examples are taken before this date, it is suggested that they are reviewed or summarised along the lines of ‘pre-1980 a range of measures were attempted but they were largely successful or not’.

Any question which includes a type of factor requires other factors to be included in the response. The style of this question will be unfamiliar to some candidates, so should be practised by centres.

General comments

It was good to see that candidates made very good use of the data presented to them. Many candidates scored well on the point marked **part (a)** questions; however, it is worth noting that development of one point could only reach a maximum of 2 marks. Some candidates need to write more broadly about the data they are presented with. Comment about the main feature of the data/overall trend/pattern/impression is always useful, with specific data to back this up, and anomalies, if present.

In the **part (b)** answers, those which achieved Level 3 gave examples and addressed all parts of the question being asked. If candidates chose to use the figures in their answer, copying is given no credit, so candidates need to ‘do something’ with the information given to them, either by giving explanations for what they see or making comparisons between highest and lowest figures, trends or places on a map, etc.

On balance, candidates were well versed in appropriate geographical concepts and had learned some suitable examples.

For the essay questions, the better responses structured the whole essay as an assessment (a Level 3/4 response); some provided assessment in the introduction and the conclusion (a Level 2/3 response); some omitted it or made a simple statement (Level 1).

The best responses do more than take a narrative approach of learned content and apply knowledge and understanding to the question being asked. Examples should be used throughout and these can vary from places, strategies, techniques, methods, policies, etc. Weaker responses were, as ever, reliant on

description of specific situations and laid insufficient emphasis on evaluation and assessment. In many cases the evaluation was inferred or placed in a simple conclusion.

Candidate performance could be enhanced by using time well, such as in choosing carefully which questions to answer, by reading both in full and thinking about and planning the responses before starting. As essays carry 20 marks, they should take more time and be longer than the responses to **parts (a) and (b)** which carry 10 marks.

Comments on specific questions

Production, location and change

Question 1

- (a) This was generally done well, with most picking out the overall pattern. Most candidates used data and compass directions to describe location well. A small number did not use the data, simply using 'higher' or 'lower'. Some candidates lost marks as they tended to describe what was shown on the map, but failed to describe the pattern.
- (b) There were some good answers suggesting a good working knowledge of the informal sector. Most saw the difficulties of recording hidden activities and most also saw that evading authority (especially tax authorities) is a significant factor along with the illegality of some of the activities involved. Most of the candidates suggested the fairly obvious points about a lack of government data, not being part of the tax system, or people not wanting to divulge information. Some then went on to make thoughtful points about seasonality, temporary work, criminal activity or the position of women in relation to employment.

Question 2

In most cases candidates showed a reasonable understanding of both physical and economic factors. The quality of responses was often dictated by the level of detail and the use of examples. At the lowest level, candidates tended to agree with the statement and used examples of more extreme environments where physical influences might be more dominant. However, there were a number of sophisticated responses where there was a clear discussion, often bringing in economic factors and how these can modify physical conditions and how technology is playing an increasing role in food production. Examples of the Green Revolution and irrigation schemes were frequently the vehicle for this type of discussion. The focus was more often on production rather than land use, although this did not appear to impede answers. A number used Von Thunen as an idea, with varying levels of success. Where this dominated the discussion, the answer tended to lack a contemporary awareness of the question.

Question 3

Candidates appeared to find this question challenging, often resorting to simply describing change and referencing government policy in relation to encouraging economic diversification. Many chose India as the example, and demonstrated a lot of good 'historical' knowledge of India's post-Independence industrialisation policies. Answers tended sometimes to be overly descriptive with insufficient emphasis placed on assessing the success of these policies, especially the most recent ones. In this context, answers frequently lacked a focus on manufacturing and simply became a general description of national policy. The consequence of this was that a number of candidates drifted away from the key aim of the question, bringing in broader aspects about trade and globalisation and the growth of outsourcing in India. In most cases there was creditworthy material but answers generally lacked the focus required to achieve the highest marks.

Environmental management

Question 4

- (a) This was generally well answered. Perceptive candidates used the photograph effectively to produce 'local' answers. However, merely restating text shown on the diagram is a low level skill that cannot be rewarded. Candidates need to be encouraged to develop the information given to them.

- (b) Answers provided a wide range of environmental problems depending on the scale chosen and the type of biofuel with which the candidate was most familiar. Many described soil landscape degradation in its many forms as a critical issue; others, on a more global scale, saw the impact on global climate through deforestation while some saw the growing of biofuels as a threat to food security. A few candidates took this further by identifying threats to water systems. In most cases, differentiation was a result of the extent to which candidates simply offered a list or developed their ideas by offering some degree of explanation.

Question 5

The quality of responses was generally dictated by the examples chosen. Those candidates who used Norway or Iceland generally produced thoughtfully documented responses which were clearly evaluative. In many cases, these answers had considerable detail and were effectively used to show a sound understanding of energy security and had a clear discussion about energy policy and the trend towards the use of renewables. A number of candidates took this further by including observations about how the per cent use of renewable energy in the energy mix is partly dictated by the physical resource base, and how population related demand will also play a part in the extent to which energy demand might be satisfied by renewables in the future. Unfortunately, a significant number of candidates used inappropriate examples or no specific examples. Some were inevitably attracted to the Three Gorges Dam in China, despite the answer being restricted to HIC. This was a pity because often they had a sound understanding of the question and with appropriate examples would have achieved a very creditable mark.

Question 6

This was one of the most popular questions. A wide range of 'degraded' environments were used. The more popular were related to harsh environments being affected by desertification, river environments being affected by industrial and urban growth and areas of urban decay. Specific examples included those from the sub-continental (as in the case of Namibia) or the local (Macau) and the unusual (as in the degradation of nuclear testing sites in Australia). Very small scale examples were a little self-limiting since the causes were limited as indeed were the management attempts, with the result that the answers were rather thin. The success here was in the management and an evaluation of the management. Answers ranged from the largely descriptive and historical (London Docklands), which were generally self-limiting, to more contemporary examples where there was a clear understanding of improvement strategies. This approach generally lent itself more successfully to evaluation since it allowed a more logical way through the essay – 'these are the causes', 'this is what has been attempted', 'these are the results of the attempts to improve the area'. If candidates can identify a clear journey through any of the evaluative questions, they have a sound plan which will inevitably lead to the possibility of both ongoing evaluation and a clearly evaluative conclusion.

Global interdependence

Question 7

- (a) This question was generally answered effectively with most candidates able to identify both the positive relationship and possible anomalies. A number of candidates failed to fully develop points and make their answer secure by not using the data, while a very small number simply repeated the data, country by country, with only a marginal attempt to identify any relationship.
- (b) A wide range of ideas was expressed in response to this question, most of which had some merit. The major point of differentiation was the level of explanation or development. In some cases, candidates would have been better to have focused on three or four points and offered reasons (as requested in the question) why they may be significant rather than including an extensive list of ideas which subsequently offered limited individual development. The emphasis was on level of economic development, the range of attractions and ease of access. Some made very appropriate reference to political situations, using both examples from Figure 7.1 and others from around the world to illustrate.

Question 8

This question was generally done well, with candidates showing a good level of understanding. Those who took a balanced view by considering different types of aid, including short term emergency aid and development aid, often produced thoughtfully evaluative answers, especially when appropriate examples were used. There was excellent use of some NGO-sponsored examples of aid, while tied aid examples such as the Pergau Dam and other 'top down' infrastructure projects were used well. Those who took a more one-sided view at times appeared to have made a judgement and then looked for examples to justify their judgement. A small number of candidates appeared to be slightly unsure about what constitutes aid and included observations about investment or TNC involvement. Debt relief as a variety of aid was acceptable. There was both widespread knowledge and perceptive evaluation in some of these answers.

Question 9

This was another very popular question where the majority of candidates showed a good general understanding, and in most cases brought in appropriate case study material at a range of scales. In some cases, answers were rather too descriptive, often highlighting the pressures and issues created by the growth of tourism without fully exploring the question of sustainability. Those candidates who used examples effectively to discuss both environmental and economic sustainability generally produced sound answers. In many ways it was a question of selecting the best example to fit the question rather than trying to mould a learned example to fit the question, which was evident in some answers. Good responses defined sustainability at the beginning and then explored how the example related to the three dimensions.

Economic transition

Question 10

- (a) The majority of candidates recognised that the ACT had a higher ranking and highlighted this by observing the relative number of top measures. However, the emphasis was on comparison and often that did not come through. Too many merely described where ACT and NT were in the table. Some candidates struggled at times, quoting data that was inaccurate.
- (b) This appeared to be the most challenging of the **part (b)** questions and few candidates produced a clear Level 3 answer. A reasonable number identified the idea that not all information can be gathered by using statistics and that some information may be more subjective. However, they did not always get far beyond this by considering specific data (from Fig. 10.1) and addressing the idea in the question about 'why a combination of statistics and surveys' is often required. Weaker candidates struggled with this or simply left it out.

Question 11

A significant number of candidates were able to consider global shift, particularly in relation to manufacturing. The use of specific companies (Nike, Dyson and Apple were popular options) often helped in the examination of this trend. A number of candidates took this further by examining how some Asian countries are now outsourcing to other cheaper locations, showing a clear level of contemporary thinking and expressing the dynamic nature of globalisation. In many cases, answers were expressed through an understanding of TNCs and how they have developed, both in relation to reducing costs and responding to changing markets. A small number of candidates used the rapid economic change in China as an example, often with a sound appreciation of how China is expanding its economic dominance by investing in countries throughout the world or by using the example of how Chinese business is expanding rapidly in parts of Africa. A small number of candidates were slightly side-tracked by the idea of 'impact' expressed in the question and drifted into ideas about problems (impacts) of industrial decline or the environmental and exploitation issues associated with rapid economic growth in developing regions.

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