Cambridge International AS & A Level

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES & RESEARCH   **9239/12**

Paper 1 Written Examination   **October/November 2021**

INSERT   **1 hour 30 minutes**

INFORMATION
- This insert contains all the resources referred to in the questions.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. **Do not write your answers** on the insert.

This document has **4** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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The following documents consider issues related to urbanisation. Read them both in order to answer all the questions on the paper.

Document 1: adapted from *Rapid urbanisation: opportunities and challenges to improve the well-being of societies*, written by Thangavel Palanivel in 2017. The article was published by the United Nations Development Programme. The author is Deputy Director of the United Nations Human Development Report Office.

Throughout history, cities have been the main centres of learning, culture and innovation. Around half the world's people live in cities and they generate more than 80% of Global Domestic Product (GDP). The countries with the highest urban populations tend to be the richest and have the highest levels of development. Cities also benefit from having more young working-age adults.

However, nearly 40% of the world's urban expansion may be in slums with unsanitary conditions. In urban areas, economic inequality is getting worse. Many cities are located in coastal areas or on river banks. They may be at risk of natural disasters such as storms, cyclones and floods. Cities may have poor urban infrastructure – such as unreliable power systems, congested roads, poor public transport, inefficient ports and inadequate schools. This reduces cities' competitiveness and economic prospects.

So not all urbanisation is positive, especially if it is unplanned. To be able to fully capitalise on the opportunity cities offer, policymakers have to address these issues.

Around the world, cities are introducing initiatives aimed at addressing poverty and improving infrastructure. For example, former New York Mayor, Michael Bloomberg, talked about the 'Opportunity NYC: Family Rewards' initiative. This programme aimed to reduce poverty and inequalities in New York City by providing households with cash incentives for preventive health care, education and job training. According to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN Habitat, a further initiative is tackling air pollution. About 1600 cities worldwide are mapping the main sources of air pollution and taking effective measures to improve air quality.

By 2050 more than two-thirds of the world's population is projected to be living in urban areas. This rapid increase will take place mainly in the developing world. Africa and Asia will have the fastest urban growth rates. Currently, 40% of Africa's population live in urban areas. This is projected to jump to 56% by 2050. Likewise, Asia's urban population is projected to increase from 48% to 64%.

This rapid expansion in urban dwelling will require huge investment in global infrastructure. Experts estimate that USD 57 trillion will be needed by 2030 alone. More than 1 billion people live in housing that is below minimum standards of comfort and sanitation. Almost 700 million urban slum dwellers lack adequate sanitation. Combined with the lack of safe drinking water, this raises the risk of diseases, particularly among children. Rapid and unplanned urbanisation also creates inequality of both income and opportunity. These inequalities exist not only between rural and urban areas but also among different groups in cities.

By 2030 new houses will have to be built for 3 billion people. National and local governments need to become more strategic. They need a planned response to the full range of challenges and opportunities presented by rapid urbanisation. As cities grow, governments will need to supply the necessary public services and infrastructure. They must design a national urbanisation strategy to identify urban development priorities, to plan and to coordinate actions by everyone involved.

So, the world needs inclusive and sustainable urbanisation to improve the well-being of societies. Future human development depends on how well this urbanisation is managed.

Document 2: adapted from *City planning suffers growth pains of Australia's population boom*, written by Glen Searle in 2017. The article was published in 'The Conversation', a not-for-profit news organisation, with contributions from academics and researchers. The author is an Honorary Associate Professor in Planning, University of Queensland and University of Sydney, Australia.

Australia has the highest rate of population growth of all the medium and large OECD* countries. And more than three-quarters of the growth is in four cities: Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth. But urban planning for this growth is often inadequate.

For a start, urban growth boundaries, designed to reduce infrastructure costs and save agricultural land, have failed. At the same time, urban development planning is not protecting important natural environments, such as the koala habitat around Brisbane and the Banksia woodland in Perth. In Melbourne, the urban growth boundary has repeatedly been pushed outwards and the city is struggling to control urban expansion. In Brisbane, a 2015 University of Queensland study found that 75% of re-zoned land (protected land, reclassified to allow development) was owned by well-connected individuals. The researchers concluded that re-zoning of previously protected land was mainly made possible by these landowners' personal connections.

Despite their expansion into rural areas, Australian cities have less green open space. To reduce costs, new suburbs have virtually no backyards because the planning process does not include minimum garden areas. Developers are not required to provide new open space for higher-density urban populations. The result is urban areas that lack greenery and recreation space.

Furthermore, poor planning in Melbourne has allowed developers to construct "vertical slums" of micro-apartments of under 50 square metres with windowless bedrooms. Such developments are illegal in comparable world cities. A recent report found that weak planning controls have allowed Melbourne's high-rise apartments to be built at four times the densities allowed in Hong Kong, New York and Tokyo.

Rising populations require more infrastructure. According to the Local Government Association of New South Wales, states cannot afford to provide adequate urban infrastructure and services for growing populations. Part of the problem is Australia's centralised tax system. For instance, 80% of Sydney's taxes go to the national government, not the New South Wales state government.

Urban population growth will lead to huge increases in traffic congestion costs. However, electoral politics are preventing good public transport strategies such as metro rail. Big construction companies in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane are encouraging investment in private profit-making transport infrastructure, so inner-city motorway developments are still proceeding.

But building new inner-city motorways ignores costs to the community. In Sydney, longer but quicker commuting trips by car increase urban sprawl and add to pollution. They also reduce the use of environmentally friendly public transport, which in turn cuts local government income. Comparable cities overseas, such as San Francisco, Toronto, Vancouver and Los Angeles, stopped building inner-city motorways years ago.

Perhaps the answer is reduced urban growth. But Australian cities have many stakeholders – the development industry, property owners and many more. All have a vested interest in continued rapid urban growth, and they push to keep that growth going.

So, national government must recognise the problem and get more involved in the planning and management of urban growth.

* Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) – promotes policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world.

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