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Global politics

Higher level and standard level

Paper 1

26 April 2024

Zone A afternoon | Zone B afternoon | Zone C afternoon

1 hour 15 minutes

Instructions to candidates

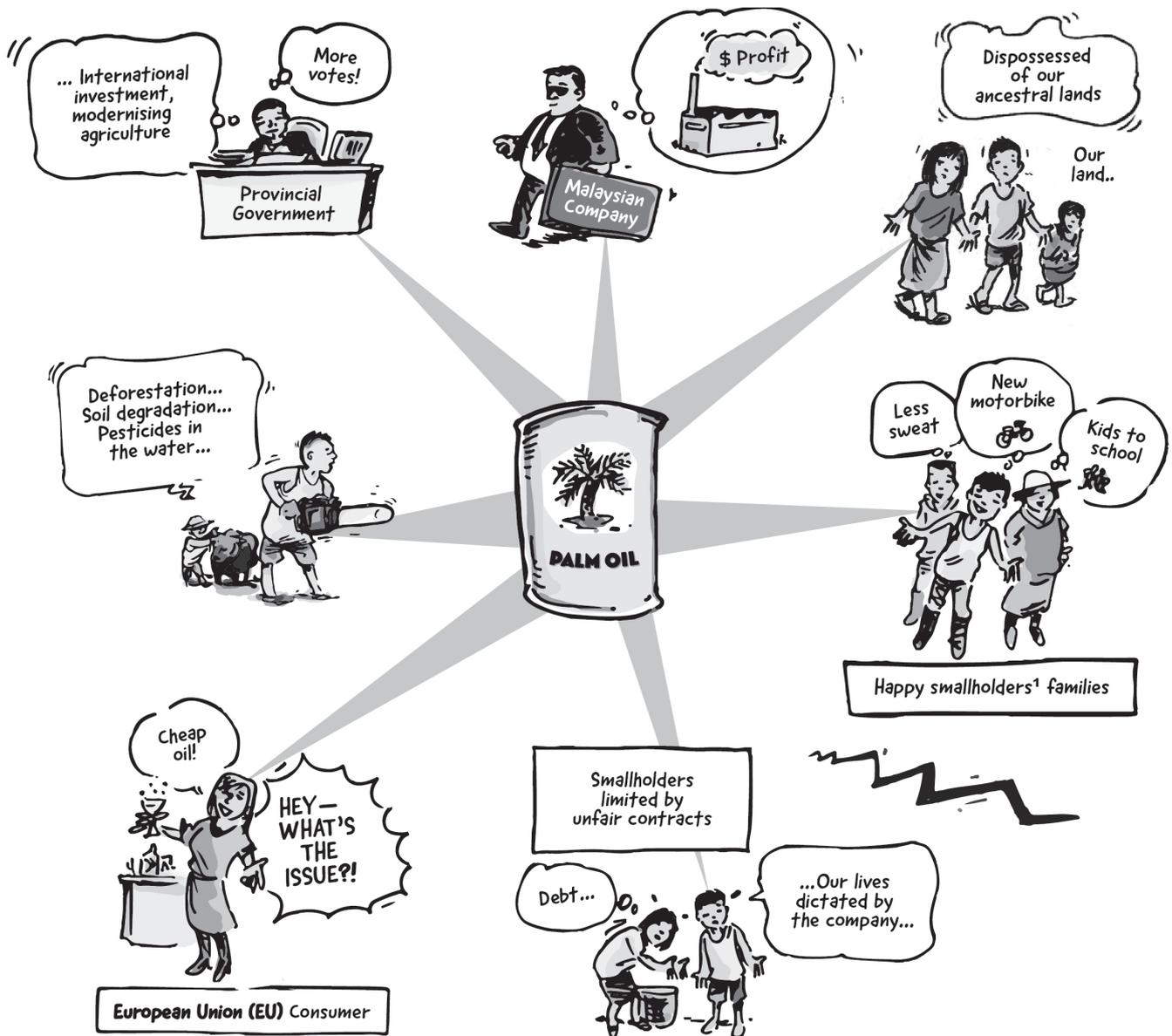
- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Answer all the questions.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is **[25 marks]**.

Unit 3: Development

Debates surrounding development: challenges of globalization, inequality and sustainability

Read all the sources carefully and answer all the questions that follow.

Source A Adapted from “Grievances and other stakeholder interests in the oil palm project...”, a cartoon illustrating the views of people affected by the palm oil industry in the Philippines. Stockholm Environment Institute (2014).



¹ smallholder: a person who owns or manages a small farm

Source B Adapted from “Britain could seal Asian trade deal by adopting a fresh attitude to palm oil” an article by the Primary Industries Minister in Malaysia, *Financial Times* newspaper (2020).

While western economies continue to struggle and the UK’s economic growth slows due to uncertainty over European Union (EU) trade talks, Asia will increasingly become the engine of global prosperity.

Malaysia’s new reformist government has taken significant steps towards sustainability and conservation that the west has largely ignored. To date, 70 % of all Malaysian cultivated areas are officially certified through our new Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil standard. The other 30 % of palm oil production represents the hundreds of thousands of smallholder farmers that find it difficult to meet the costs of the new standards.

Just months after announcing Malaysia’s sustainability commitments the EU proposed banning palm oil for renewable fuels. In doing so, EU leaders may not have realised the message they sent developing world smallholder farmers — that their efforts to become sustainable are irrelevant. This industry through which so many are trying to lift themselves out of poverty must be destroyed to save the planet. Scientific reports suggest banning palm oil could be environmentally disastrous. This would shift demand to the EU’s own biofuel industries, crops like rapeseed, corn or soya — all of which require more land, water and fertiliser. That would result in more, not less, deforestation and extinction of plants and animals.

Britain could be the nation that helps pioneer a fresh attitude: instead of working against us, working with us to support our drive to mandatory sustainable palm oil for all producers.

Source C Adapted from “The geopolitics² of palm oil and deforestation”, an article about the current debates on farming palm oil from *The Conversation* website, theconversation.com (2019). The Conversation is an independent source of news and views, sourced from the academic and research community.

Since 1950, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) has compiled detailed data showing that the same phenomenon occurs everywhere: all countries see an increase of fats consumption when poverty decreases and urban growth increases. At the same time, another trend has taken place where vegetable fats are progressively replacing animal fats.

This leads to political questions: which vegetable oils will be produced to feed the world, who will sell them, who will control their production, and where will there be enough land to grow them? All the agricultural multinational corporations (MNCs) are perfectly aware of world demographic trends and the rise of the middle class in developing and emerging regions.

Oil palms grow only under humid tropical conditions and produce 5–8 times more oil per 10 000 m² than the other crops. Without palm oil, the future demand for alternative vegetable oils would require cultivation of land areas almost as large as the Australian continent. To supply to global markets, agriculture corporations as well as some governments are racing to secure land.

Oil palm trees, as one of the most profitable crops for farmers, help fight rural poverty in tropical countries. In humid Africa, oil palms are one of the last safety nets for the poorest. Currently, Indonesia and Malaysia produce more than 80 % of the world’s palm oil: in both countries palm oil development was, and is still responsible for the livelihoods of millions of smallholders.

² geopolitics: the influence of geographical factors (human and physical) on politics

Source D

Adapted from “Here’s what deforestation looks like in 2019 — and what we can do about it”, an article from the *Mighty Earth* website, www.mightyearth.org (2019). Mighty Earth is a global campaign organization that works to protect the environment.

In 2018, the world lost about 30 million acres of forest, according to important new data. In 2015, Cambodia had the fastest acceleration of tree cover loss in the world. Academic research published at the time showed a correlation between rubber prices and deforestation in the region — as rubber became more profitable, more trees were cleared.

Between 2004 and 2012, Brazil reduced deforestation in the Amazon by more than two-thirds, even as it started to regrow tens of millions of acres that had previously been destroyed. This success was achieved largely by private sector action including big animal feed traders. Unfortunately, just as Brazil’s private sector was showing the world how to break the link between agriculture expansion and deforestation, some agricultural businesses in Brazil used their political influence to undermine this progress. Brazil weakened aspects of its Forest Code law, signalling greater toleration for deforestation even where it was already banned by law. These weaker protections meant Brazilian ecosystems were vulnerable to both a changing climate and industrial exploitation.

In November 2017 the chocolate industry, as well as the governments of Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana, launched the Cocoa & Forests Initiative. Yet this has failed to establish a serious industry-wide forest monitoring and enforcement mechanism to ensure that forests are actually protected. One reason this hasn’t happened is that the Cocoa & Forests Initiative has not included tough advocacy non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like Mighty Earth or Greenpeace in their processes, perhaps in the hope that they would not be forced to deliver results.

1. Using Source A, outline how palm oil is linked to issues in development. [3]
 2. With explicit reference to Source B **and one** example you have studied, explain how political factors may inhibit sustainable development. [4]
 3. Compare what Source C **and** Source D tell us about development and sustainability. [8]
 4. Using all sources **and** your own knowledge examine the view that states are the most effective actors in promoting sustainable development. [10]
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References:

- Source A** Kløcker Larsen, R., Dimaano, F., Pido, M. D. 2014. *The emerging oil palm industry in Palawan Island, the Philippines: Livelihoods, environment and corporate accountability*. SEI Working Paper 2014-03, <http://www.sei-international.org/publications?pid=2529>. Illustration by Simon Kneebone. Source adapted.
- Source B** Kok, T., 2020. Britain could seal Asian trade deal by adopting a fresh attitude to palm oil. *Financial Times*, [online] Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/73cfcc56-5a24-4576-87af-c529f9a34d36> [Accessed 2 March 2021]. Source adapted.
- Source C** Roda, J-M., 2019. The geopolitics of palm oil and deforestation. *The Conversation* [online] Available at: <https://theconversation.com/the-geopolitics-of-palm-oil-and-deforestation-119417>. Jean-Marc Roda. Researcher in economics, Cirad.
- Source D** Hurowitz, G., 2019. *Here's what deforestation looks like in 2019 — and what we can do about it*. [online] Available at: <http://www.mightyearth.org/heres-what-deforestation-looks-like-in-2019-and-what-we-can-do-about-it/> [Accessed 2 March 2021]. Source adapted.