

**UNIVERSITY OF MALTA**  
**SEC SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE**

**SOCIAL STUDIES**

**May 2007**

**EXAMINERS' REPORT\***

**MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION  
CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS BOARD**

**\*[NOTE: The following is a summary of the examiners' full report.  
The original can be consulted at the Matsec Office.]**

**SEC SOCIAL STUDIES**  
**May 2007 Session**  
**Examiner's Report**

**Statistical Data**

A total number of 2126 candidates registered to sit for the examination indicating a decrease of 196 candidates over last year. There were 889 applicants for Option A, i.e. 40 applicants less than last year and 1237 for Option B (156 applicants less than last year). There were 3.9% absent.

**Table 1: Distribution of grades for SEC Social Studies – May 2007 session**

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	U	Abs	Total
I+IIA	12	58	134	152	270	–	–	248	15	889
I+IIB	–	–	–	299	181	143	170	376	68	1237
<b>Total</b>	12	58	134	451	451	143	170	624	83	2126
<b>%</b>	0.56	2.73	6.30	21.21	21.21	6.73	8.00	29.35	3.90	100.00

Among candidates taking Option A, in Section A of Paper I (questions 1-8) question number 5 (on Maltese cultural identity) was the most popular. Question number 4 (on norms and values) has the highest average (6.53) while question number 1 (on the main aspects of the environment) has the lowest average (3.40). Question number 1 (on the main aspects of the environment) was the least popular question.

In Section B (questions 9-16) question number 12 (on reasons why poverty still exists) was the most popular. Question number 16 (on deviant groups) has the highest average (6.62) while question number 14 (on market economy) has the lowest average (2.49). The least popular question was question number 9 (defining concepts of economic interdependence, affluence and sovereignty).

**Table 2: Paper I – Option A (889)**

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16
<b>No. of students</b>	121	464	686	616	750	588	509	622	225	669	307	853	673	395	552	682
<b>Total Marks</b>	411	3020	3964	4020	4480	3339	2872	2780	727	2390	1764	5388	2266	982	3159	4517
<b>Average Mark</b>	3.40	6.51	5.78	6.53	5.97	5.68	5.64	4.47	3.23	3.57	5.75	6.32	3.37	2.49	5.72	6.62

In the case of candidates taking Option B, in Paper I Section A (questions 1-8) question number 5 (on Maltese cultural identity) was the most popular and has the highest average (6.02). Question number 1 (on the main aspects of the environment) which was the least popular has the lowest average (2.96).

In Section B (questions 9-16) question number 12 (on why poverty still exists) was the most popular. Question number 16 (on deviant groups) has the highest average (5.44). The least popular was Question number 9 (defining concepts of economic interdependence, affluence and sovereignty). Question number 14 (on market economy) has the lowest average (1.69).

**Table 3: Paper I – Option B (1237 candidates)**

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16
<b>No. of students</b>	333	667	970	643	1045	844	568	698	290	829	354	1136	894	652	745	816
<b>Total Marks</b>	987	3825	5177	3675	6290	4524	2921	2729	621	2638	1499	5734	2430	1100	3563	4440
<b>Average Mark</b>	2.96	5.73	5.34	5.72	6.02	5.36	5.14	3.91	2.14	3.18	4.23	5.05	2.72	1.69	4.78	5.44

In Paper IIA each question carries a maximum of 25 marks. Question number 4 has the highest average (12.29) while question number 7 which was the most popular one has the lowest (8.75). The least popular question was number 8. It may be noted that this year's general average (10.30) was lower than last year's (11.29).

**Table 4: Paper IIA – Average mark per question**

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
<b>No. of students</b>	507	367	174	697	309	563	785	77
<b>Total Marks</b>	5797	3585	1576	8567	3422	6083	6872	713
<b>Average Mark</b>	11.43	9.77	9.06	12.29	11.07	10.80	8.75	9.26

In Paper IIB, each question carries a maximum of 25 marks. Question number 6 has the highest average (13.20) while question number 8 which was the least popular has the lowest average (9.90). The most popular question was number 7. Here the general average (11.01) is higher than that of last year's (10.86)

**Table 5: Paper IIB – Average mark per question**

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
<b>No. of students</b>	797	364	524	629	128	1031	1053	79
<b>Total Marks</b>	10014	3787	5855	6252	1315	13612	11196	782
<b>Average Mark</b>	12.56	10.40	11.17	9.94	10.27	13.20	10.63	9.90

There was a 2% decrease of candidates who opted to answer in English. The number of candidates opting to do so remains low.

**Table 6: Percentage of candidates answering in English**

<u>Candidates opting to answer in English</u>	
<u>Option A (889 candidates)</u>	
Paper IA:	138 candidates – 15.52%
Paper IIA:	126 candidates – 2.71%
<u>Option B (1237 candidates)</u>	
Paper IB:	126 candidates – 10.19%
Paper IIB:	112 candidates – 9.05%
<u>All candidates (2126)</u>	
Paper IA and Paper IB:	264 candidates – 12.42%
Paper IIA and Paper IIB:	238 candidates – 11.19%

## **Paper I**

### **General Comments**

The questions for both section A and B were well balanced and could be easily understood by the candidates. They were straightforward and relevant to the syllabus, although emphasis was on culture.

The candidates showed an improvement on previous years in providing more informative answers. There were a substantial number of candidates who answered in English. One criticism that has to be made is that most answers were taken directly from memorized teacher given notes. Candidates use these notes extensively. This contributes to the knowledge of the candidates but does not help them in using their own thinking skills, so that whenever they had to apply this knowledge they found difficulty in answering. This was evident in such questions as Questions 1 and 3.

The impression that a good number of candidates have no idea of the Syllabus and have sat for the examination/or even been encouraged to sit for this examination, assuming that anything scribbled on the examination copybook would have to be taken as a fountain of knowledge.

There is the problem of paragraph length in the answers given: some candidates wrote short sentences, others counted the words meticulously, while others still wrote lengthy long-winded passages. All indicate that these pupils are not being given the opportunity to have language exercises in writing regularly.

There were some well-presented answers both in terms of handwriting and language, but they lack knowledge and ideas. This is being taken as an indication of lack of preparation and reading on themes related with the Social Studies syllabus. Many candidates have not idea of social concepts.

Some candidates have language problems whether they are writing in English or in Maltese. Some just copied parts from the passage given to provide an answer, others started with long-winded preambles. In the structures produced, sentences/paragraphs become meaningless: e.g. 'lanqas saqaf that rashom'; 'is-servizzi u l-prodotti li hawn iduru mas-saqajn jistghu jigu akkwistati facilment ghaliex l-ghazla hi wahda kbira'; 'b'hekk ma jkunx hawn ugwaljanza izda kulhadd jigi meqjus l-istess'. Though many candidates opt to write in Maltese, their knowledge is rather too crude, e.g. 'id-dinja saret bhal globu' to define 'globalizzazzjoni'; 'minhabba' instead of 'minkejja'; 'hielsament'; 'jixxi'; 'varjijiet', 'komplicita bejn pajjizi biex jghinu 'l-pajjiz fqar'; 'hawn hafna nuqqas ta' guh'; 'mghandhomx ghalfejn tkun prezenti'; 'fid-dinja mhux kulhadd hu sinjur hafna jew ftit' are other examples of sentences indicating limited knowledge of Maltese vocabulary and idiom.

Lack of preparation is evident by the amount of digressions and vague answers produced often based on suppositions. Some candidates used vulgar words to answer questions, which is rather unbecoming but again betraying lack of proper training and development of attitudes. Some candidates seem to have never practised sentence/paragraph/essay writing.

The amount of weak handwriting, bad spelling, bad punctuation and lack of proper idiomatic expression is alarmingly on the increase.

A good number of candidates ignore rubrics. A good number have not even written the number of questions answered in the space provided on the front page of the copybook. Invigilators should be told that it is their duty to instruct candidates to read the rubrics on the examination paper thoroughly and to check that each candidate has written all details asked for on the front page of the copybook.

### **Specific Comments on Paper I**

*Question 1:* This was a very difficult question for the candidates. Very few chose to answer this question. Very few indeed answered it well. Most answers were limited to explaining man's responsibility to protect the natural environment through NGOs and governments' actions., to examples of natural habitat and humanity's harmful effects such as pollution. Those that were not correctly answered did not distinguish different aspects of the environment and instead gave different examples of only the natural environment.

*Question 2:* This question proved popular and was answered by most candidates. They did identify the basic elements of culture. Explanations however were not so good except for explanation of religious beliefs and moral behaviour. Incorrect answers did not refer to the texts as specifically asked by the question.

*Question 3:* This was also a popular question with most candidates. Many referred to customs and tradition which have been passed on from generation to generation with some modifications. Others referred to events which took place in the past but which still leave consequences today. Some candidates failed to give correct answers.

*Question 4:* this was also a very popular question with the candidates. The definition which was often given refers to the notes suggested by the teachers. Some candidates confused 'norms' with 'values'; they did not distinguish sufficiently between 'norms' and 'values'. Most candidates did not refer to exclusion from the group although most did mention positive and negative sanctions.

*Question 5:* This was a very popular question with the candidates. It was mostly well explained with candidates referring mainly to customs, traditions and religious feasts. There were candidates who failed to mention the language as giving us our national identity and so distinguishing us from other societies. Hardly anyone referred to political aspirations.

*Question 6:* This was a popular question with most candidates. Most, if not all, referred to leisure time spent at Paceville during the weekend. They also referred to hairstyles and clothes worn by young people. Some also referred to the musical tastes of the young. There were candidates who referred to

the ever increasing number of young people missing Mass on Sundays, and accepting co-habitation as something which is normal in society. Others also made reference to drug taking and so to deviancy. Nearly all candidates acknowledged youth culture as a sub-culture differing from the mainstream culture.

*Question 7:* The main emphasis by the candidates who answered this question was on Religion – ours being a Christian culture – so the celebration of feasts was once again in the forefront. A substantial number of candidates referred to the youth subculture, with most candidates repeating what they wrote in answer to question 6. Other candidates mentioned ethnic groups migrating to other countries as forming a subculture. Special mention was made of people of Arabic origin living in Malta.

*Question 8:* Most candidates referred to migration as the main cause for cultural diversity. However, most of them failed to give reasons for such migration. Others failed to mention the need of peaceful co-existence. Many candidates referred only to illegal emigration to Malta and in this case they only referred to migrants from the African continent and not from other countries as well. Incorrect answers referred to different cultures worldwide rather than different cultures within the country.

*Question 9:* Not so frequently answered. Many candidates lost marks because they indicted that a) they had very scant ideas of what ‘economic interdependence’ means, very often limiting themselves to transport of goods across countries and not indicating any dependence resulting from specialization, some even defining it as special assistance provided by the state; b) they had no idea what the word ‘affluence’ means, often mixing it with the word ‘influence’; c) ‘sovereignty’ meant simply kingship/sovereign and they failed to refer to the political role of a state given territorial area and people. Some often included irrelevant reference to political leaders, peace and protectionism versus globalization.

*Question 10:* Though there were some good answers referring to information technologies, the liberalization of markets and transnational commerce. Many limited their answers to free unimaginable terms; and many referred to market economy and globalization without giving any explanation or stating that free circulation implies free distribution of good or no price control.

*Question 11:* Though few candidates know what ‘G8’ stands for, many could give the names of two states that are considered as members of the G8, though there are some who still refer to Russia as the Soviet Union and others fail to distinguish between America and the USA. When it comes to what G8 stands for and what its aims are, many failed miserably often stating that the G8 is a charitable organization/an institution like NATO/a pressure group. There were a few who wrote that the G8 aims ‘to maintain the status quo in the world’. Yet there were a few others who have some idea of the aims of the G8 and they produced some good answers.

*Question 12:* Here some candidates did not even understand that the question asked for two good reasons to explain why poverty still exists in certain areas. Many indicated national debt, cheap labour, spending on armaments and exploitation by multinational companies and national disasters. But many more still started their answer with a ‘maybe because etc’/’jista’ jkun ghaliex’ etc indicating that they were just guessing. Others simply wrote the phrase ‘because the country is poor’ while others equated poverty with communism, fair trade effects and dictatorship. Some strange answers:

- ‘the governments of India and Brazil are cruel’
- ‘il-faqar bombastiku’
- ‘ihallsu bic-cicri’
- ‘il-pajjizi ghandhom dittatorjat jew anarkija. Dan ifisser li n-nies jistghu jaghmlu li jridu’.

*Question 13:* The great majority of candidates found this term difficult to explain, the best answers focusing on stratification or the family as a nucleus of society and they tended to emphasize culture and lifestyles rather than the collection of individuals who interact in systematic ways with one another and that a defining feature or a group is that its members have an awareness of a common identity. Some mixed it up with pressure groups, religious groups or class discrimination.

*Question 14:* Many candidates simply had no idea what market economy or free economy is all about. There were many who tried to describe briefly different types of economies – capitalist, central or mixed. The knowledge of others is limited to the local market idea of selling and buying (i.e. monti,

flea market, supermarket, black market...) emphasizing the absence of controls and the removal of subsidies. Some typical short answers:

- 'tal-monti'; 'bejgh fuq l-idejn';
- 'taghmel pressa fuq min jiehu hsieb is-suq';
- 'ekonomija fejn il-gvern ma jipprvodi ebda ghajjnuna socjali, kollox jiddependi mis-suq';
- 'markets specializing in economy'.

*Question 15:* A good number of candidates did not understand the question and did not explain that norms and values held by most members of society determine rule of conduct specifying appropriate behaviour in given social contexts. Many were unable to distinguish between norms and law/civic duties and failed to give any good example. For many, a rule implies only negative regulations. Some examples:

- 'in spite of democracy we find certain rules for society';
- 'timxi mal-moda u darba fil-gimgha tmur il-quddies';
- 'wara kollox hu l-individwu dak li jiddeciedi kif igib ruhu hu u ma jkun mgieghel minn hadd gas wara kollox kulhadd ghandu d-dritt ghal-liberta';
- 'ma nitkellmux blg-ikel f'halqna ghaxinkella tkun qiesek annimal'.

*Question 16:* There were few very good answers, but many limited themselves to the definition as groups of people whose behaviour goes against the norms and values of society. Examples were limited often with not distinction being made between sub-culture groups and criminals. There were candidates who just turned the term into a sentence (e.g. 'people who deviate') to provide an answer and others who evidently do not know what deviance means listed a number of irrelevant groups as examples, e.g. senior citizens, disabled persons, pressure groups, voluntary workers, trade unions! Many candidates, however, are aware of the fact that certain deviant groups could have negative effects on society. Some surprising examples of answers given:

- 'thieves and criminals';
- 'illegal immigrants are deviant people';
- 'animal rights groups';
- 'gruppi devjanti huma gruppi li jmorru kontra l-imgiba abnormali';
- 'nothing wrong with Satanism legally';
- 'prisoners are deviant groups';
- 'weak people easy prey to temptation of the powerful';
- 'people who fight for power'.

## **Paper IIA**

### **General Comments**

Keeping in mind that the aim of Paper 2A is to provide an opportunity for candidates to deal with a number of areas in depth, one must conclude that most candidates' papers were disappointing and off the mark expected in a SEC Social Studies examination.

Only a limited number of students sat for the Social Studies examination well prepared. These candidates not only studied intensively the various social concepts listed in the syllabus but were also well-disposed to engage such notions in rational and dialectical manner. Here it is positive to note that these limited number of students demonstrated that they had engaged themselves in perusing publications other than the expected textbook materials leading to sociological arguments and evidence that were both intellectually challenging and refreshingly different. On the other hand, it was unfortunate to note that most candidates were not well-prepared and failed to achieve the level expected at a SEC level. Many erroneously assumed that they can do well by regurgitating memorised notes on the eve of the exam, or answering the listed question on the strength of common sense, general knowledge, and everyday social experience. Such an attitude is to be highly discouraged as it functions to take apart the social science status of the social studies discipline. Many candidates showed evidence of intensive memorisation of text-book material but subsequently approaching the exam with a well rehearsed answer but paying little attention to the main issue in the question. This indicated a very low level of intellectual and academic ability on their part - as if they neglected the subject for long periods of time but then tried to cram everything in a few days prior to the exam. Another disquieting point was that some answers' introductions and conclusions were highly identical. This generated an impression that some teachers are providing model answers which are in turn

memorized by the students, or that student essays are circulating amongst prospective candidates. In the majority of cases, the scientific approach to the subject was rarely evident. In fact, many candidates gave superficial answers showing that no in-depth study of the subject was made prior to their sitting for the examination. The answers generally manifested a lack of knowledge of the basic terms or concepts, skills and attitudes. On many occasions candidates did not answer the set question and instead gave textbook answers on the subject matter regardless of the specific issues addressed in the examination question.

### **Specific Comments**

*Question 1:* Apart that social mobility demonstrates that society is alive and dynamic rather than static, few candidates highlighted anything else of substance. Many overlooked how social mobility refers to the opportunity for individuals to move up or down the ladder of inequality. Few candidates submitted any valid sources of social mobility – e.g. educational achievement or financial capital – and many focused on global stratification by commenting on the quest of illegal immigrants to improve their social position.

*Question 2:* This was a very popular question although few highlighted any arguments in favour of the need of norms and values in society – e.g. that life rests on citizen's rights and obligations, and that rights need to be protected by legislation – or against – e.g. that laws and regulations curtail individual freedom, and that individual's needs should take precedence over the goals of society. Moreover, few provided examples of social facts showing the need for the law, and of situations where laws and norms are not needed.

*Question 3:* Very few candidates did well when answering this question. Indeed, many opted to reply to this question by simply stating how times are changing without offering any social studies concepts to back up and explain further their arguments. Few highlighted the increasing levels of secularisation as a result of individuals are giving greater importance to personal choices than to institutions, or spirituality whereby people are typified by a greater search for deep personal spiritual experience rather than institutionalise religion.

*Question 4:* A popular question. Many candidates providing various examples of factors leading to more women seeking paid employment outside the home such as more provision for parental leave established by the law and the changing roles of the women in the home. Yet, answers relating to the second part of the question were less valid as many candidates simply noted an increased financial income and more isolated children as the positive and negative effects of such as transition respectively.

*Question 5:* This question was answered by 310 students or 36 per cent of those who sat for the exam. Many were not clear on the concept of deviant behaviour and mixed it up with criminality. The majority if not all gave limited the example of deviant behaviour to the use of drugs. Others mixed norms and values with laws. When it came to the second part of the question, the answers given were weak. Moreover, some even spoke of positive sanctions as a means of controlling deviant behaviour. This clearly shows a lack of understanding of what sanctions really mean.

*Question 6:* This third most popular question answered by 564 students or 65 per cent of those who sat for the exam dealt with the concept of retirement and how it creates social, economic and psychological problems both for the individual and the family. Many gave appropriate examples of social, economic and psychological consequences on the retiree while others also succeeded in showing how retirement affects the family. However, very few answered correctly the second part of the question namely how older persons are being helped to overcome such problems. A good number mentioned certain services which were out of place. One also notes that the candidates did not know the age of retirement in Malta, the vast majority mentioning 65 while others said 60. Only a very limited number succeeded in showing that the retirement age for females is 60 while that for males is 61.

*Question 7:* The most popular question this year having been tackled by 90 per cent or 787 candidates. Many thought that this was an easy question. Very few gave the right definition of globalisation namely the development of social and economic relationships worldwide. However many did speak of the concept of the world as one village. Many answers mixed technological progress with the use of the internet. The majority mainly emphasised the economic aspect at the expense of the social

relationships. Many did speak of exploitation and how it threatens employment opportunities, how a country's autonomy is threatened, how globalisation can effect democracy and how free competition threatens social rights. When discussing the risks of globalisation that can cause poverty few did succeed in giving the right answers, some even went to the extreme of mentioning terrorism and wars. Almost no one mentioned how many aspects of people's lives are influenced by organisations/networks situated thousands of miles away from the societies in which they live.

*Question 8:* Not a very popular question. In fact, only 78 candidates or 9 per cent of those who sat for the exam answered this question. However, a good number of those who attempted this question did succeed in giving the right answers clearly describing the restrictive role of governments in protectionism regulating imports and curtailing competition from abroad. This being done through imposing tariffs, quotas and exchange control. Answers would have been enhanced had candidates also discussed the risks and advantages of free enterprise.

## **Paper IIB**

### **General Comments**

The coverage of the questions reflected all the section in the SEC Syllabus and in this sense the Paper was sufficiently comprehensive. Use of language was generally focused and precise and candidates could understand what was expected of them in their answers, except for Question 2 as will be explained later.

Questions across sections carried the same weighting and more or less demanded the same level of knowledge, skills and attitudes from respondents. The same cannot be said, however, for questions in the different sections: while marks were distributed equally among all questions, there were questions which were far more demanding than others in that they expected answers that may be considered beyond the SEC level. A case in point is both questions in section 4.

Considering all strengths and limitations, responses gave evidence that candidates were better prepared for this examination than in previous years. The quality of answers was varied, but it generally showed that candidates had a good input of concepts that reflected knowledge of basic sociological processes as part of Social Studies, among other disciplines. Undesirably, there were not a few who resorted only to the usual common sense approach or to mere religious-ethical information without any reference to social implications as is expected of students of Social Studies. Question 4 is one example of this common failure on the part of candidates, which needs to be seriously addressed during Social Studies lessons if we really want the subject to maintain its scientific rigour like other subjects. One has also to remark that candidates cited the same examples given in the set textbook – a good reason to conclude that students rely heavily on given material and lack personal initiative to be creative and innovative in their supporting examples. Creativity is another social skill which needs to be encouraged and developed in Social Studies.

The most popular questions were 2, 4, 6 and 7, with a significant number of candidates choosing questions 2, 3 and 5. question 8 in section 4 was the least popular.

A small number of respondents seemed to ignore the number of marks allotted to different parts of the question and wrote, for instance, at length on parts which carried few marks and briefly in others with higher marks. This calls for more training in examination skills and for greater attention to the rubrics of the questions.

### **Specific Comments**

*Question 1:* This was a popular question which most candidates demonstrating a clear knowledge of what a peer group is. However, there was a tendency among certain candidates to associate peer groups with negative elements only, e.g. having a bad influence on teenagers or introducing them to drugs, alcohol and cigarettes. In section (b) some candidates ignored the fact that the question asked for agents of **secondary** and not primary socialization and, hence, focused on the family. The functions of each were not explained in a sociological way by most candidates. In section (c) there were some who thought that the statement was referring to the agents of secondary socialization in (b). There were some interesting discussions combining elements such as teenagers wanting independence from

parents, being influenced by peer group because they are horizontal rather than vertical agents and young people being of an impressionable age. There were others who limited the argument to repeating the statement or simply stating that the influence is due to the amount of time spent with the group.

*Question 2:* Markers are of the opinion that (a) did not indicate clearly what was expected of candidates. The model answer seemed to suggest that candidates were expected to identify 'what changes' occur in a society. There were those who mentioned types of change such as evolutionary or revolutionary. Others mentioned what brings about change, thus overlapping with (b). In (b) most candidates mentioned a number of relevant issues such as the law, the state, technology, people, although there were those who limited the number of factors only to two or three considering that the question carried 20 marks. It seemed that candidates found it difficult to see the difference between the term 'process' and the term 'factors'. The model answer in the mark scheme could also have been clearer in this distinction.

*Question 3:* Most candidates did not know what vocational education is, suggesting that it is related to training for those with religious vocations. Most candidates knew what social mobility is although there were those who mixed it up with geographical mobility and focused the discussion in (b) and (c) to people being able to go to another country to study or work. In (c) there were a few who constructed an interesting argument including a number of issues supported by familiar examples. However, many candidates limited their argument simply to the importance of education for getting a good job and a good pay.

*Question 4:* The difference between 'church' and 'religion' was somewhat challenging to most candidates. The majority limited the meaning of church to the building claiming that the church is the house of God or a place of worship. Very few candidates referred to the church as a hierarchical organization or as an institution with its own roles and functions in society. Most candidates defined religion as a set of beliefs. Very few candidates made reference to religion as a source of meaning or purpose in life and as a mean of social order. Many referred to different religions while others associated religion with the teaching of Christ or even with religious knowledge as a school subject. Many candidates had a general conception that secularization is referring to the decline of importance in religion. Many others, however, either associated the concept with social change or even made an association with 'century' but not with religion. In part © a significant number of candidates resorted to religious or moral matters rather than to social/sociological issues. They were judgmental in their answer, regretting secular trends and suggesting what should be done to reverse the trend and restore our lost religiosity. There were many candidates however who referred to developments such as more use of technology, science and the media as factors bringing about these changes.

*Question 5:* Only a very small number of candidates knew the answer to (a), with many mentioning organizations such as UNICEF, Sedqa or Appogg instead. Many of the candidates who chose this question answered (b) and (c) quite satisfactorily although in (c) the majority of responses were restricted to one or two points such as compulsory education and again to agencies such as Sedqa and Appogg as well as guidance teachers. Play was the least discussed.

*Question 6:* Most candidates defined 'old people' satisfactorily. In (b) there were many candidates who saw the decrease in birth rate as the only reason for an aging population. However, various candidates mentioned the relationship between low birth rates and higher rates of aging populations, science and medicine, while a change in lifestyle and greater health awareness were mentioned only by a few candidates. Some discussed the welfare gap instead while others attributed an aging population to laziness and inactivity among the older generation. Part (c) was discussed satisfactorily by most candidates, although the number of points raised varied in relevance and importance.

*Question 7:* Most candidates found (a) more difficult to answer than (b) as in the case of question 2. The majority of respondents gave rather simplistic answers so that 'wealth' was explained in terms of rich people, oil exploration and other natural resources and with GNP. Very few candidates actually explained 'world wealth' in a holistic manner by referring to a strong economy, sustainable health care, rates of employment and high educational standards. At the same time many candidates referred to the unequal distribution in (a). In (b) candidates raised a number of relevant issues although for 20 marks, candidates were expected to cover a wide range of issues. It was interesting to note that a significant number of students are aware of the injustices practised in international trading patterns and of the advantages of fair trade. Many also mentioned the dependency of poor countries on the rich as well as

the exploitation of the poor by multinationals. While most candidates mentioned technology or industrialization, less candidates gave importance to factors like investment in education, health, good governance and education in the developed countries

*Question 8:* Very few candidates opted for this question and many of these gave very poor answers to (a). Markers agreed that questions like this are too technical and therefore difficult to be included in a Paper at SEC level. Most of those who chose this question restricted their answer to (a) to only the aims of the UN and mentioned that it has a number of agencies without specifying them. Only an insignificant number of candidates mentioned the institutions which make up its structure. Parts (b) and (c) were answered satisfactorily by most of the few who chose this question.

### **Recommendations**

Paper setters may consider including one or two questions based on simple interpretations of data from, e.g. graphs, tables, case studies, photographs. This would encourage students to be more reflective in their answers as well as send messages to schools about the need of more training in the skills of social enquiry and interpretation for students to be active and responsible learners and citizens at the national and global level.

**The Chairperson  
Board of Examiners  
July 2007**