



## **Concours ITA session 2014**

### **Composition : Anglais 3**

**Durée : 2 Heures**

#### **Read the text and fulfil the tasks below.**

The pressure of population on the environment is manifested in the increasing use of marginal land, failing productivity, soil erosion, destruction of the forests and desertification. The system of shifting cultivation widely practised in Africa presupposes the availability of plenty of productive land. With growing population, agricultural land is becoming scarce, with the result more and more marginal and less productive lands are brought under cultivation. This has resulted in reduction in fallow periods from one to two years, which is hardly sufficient for the land to recoup its vitality. Fall in productivity and soil erosion accompany the overuse of land. It is estimated that the number of agriculturalists is increasing at 2.5 to 3.0 percent year while the number of pastoralists is increasing at 1.5 to 2.0 percent per year. At the same time; the animal population is increasing at the rate of 1.5 percent per year. The combined effect of human and animal pressure on the land has been environmental degradation through soil erosion and removal of vegetation cover due to overgrazing over exploitation. Other consequences have been increases in run-off surface water, decrease in infiltration, lowering of ground water levels, and loss of top soil and soil nutrients.

With rapid population increase, the demand for fuel-wood as a source of fuel has increased. Forests are being cut down at a tremendous rate, faster than the rate at which new trees are being planted. Every year, people are travelling longer distances to collect firewood, as firewood is becoming scarcer in every country. Apart from the demand for fuel wood, other factors for deforestation are the increasing use of forest land for agriculture through shifting or sedentary cultivation, conversion for pastoral purposes, and trade in timber. Estimates of deforestation in Africa range between 0.47 percent to 1.40 percent per annum. A consequence of deforestation and overgrazing is desertification, namely the stripping of the land of its topsoil. Because land is common property in much of Africa, there is competition in stripping the land, rather than in conserving it for future use frequent recurrence of drought in Sahel region is just one manifestation of desertification. Rapid population growth is one of the factors, perhaps the major factor contributing to deforestation and desertification in Africa. Slowing population growth will certainly contribute to reduction of these processes besides, making it possible to bring about the much needed reforms and technological improvements in agriculture.

*Adapted from The African Development Bank Review, Vol.4, No 2 of December 1992.*

## I-COMPREHENSION CHECK

**A- Answer by True (T) or False (F) according to your understanding of the text and justify your responses. Answer like: 6-F (justifications)**

- 1- In Africa, there have never existed any land problem.
- 2- Only human actions are detrimental to lands.
- 3- The threat of the inhabitants living in an area can be shown thanks to the degradation of soils, drought, the non-decreasing use of lands, etc.
- 4- No household practice has a link with deforestation causes.
- 5- A title like: *Population and environment* can best fit the content of this text.

**B-Vocabulary: Match the words in column A with their synonyms nor meanings in column B.**

Answer like: 8-d

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 1- pressure        | a- related to extensive agricultural breeding means   |
| 2- manifested      | b- over eating growing grass  |
| 3- fallow          | c- figures  |
| 4- recoup          | d- fact of losing plants, grass, etc.   |
| 5- pastoralists    | e- threat   |
| 6- overgrazing     | f- perceived  |
| 7- estimates       | g- taking away, removing from, taking off   |
| 8- desertification | h- get back, have again   |
| 9- stripping       | i- agricultural technique consisting in letting a ploughed land left unplanted to restore its fertility |
| 10- reforms        | j- changes that remove or put right faults, errors, etc.  |
| 11- agriculture    | k- science or practice of cultivating the land and rearing animals                                      |

## II-WRITING (15 lines maximum)

In the text, the rapid population growth is mentioned as one of the main causes of deforestation, desertification and therefore famine or lack of food in Africa. What can you propose at the agricultural level to solve such plagues? (NB: plagues: fléaux)

**III-LANGUAGE IN USE: Find the right tenses and forms for filling in the blanks of the following passage. Answer like: 11- plants**

Forests (1- *to be*) of a paramount importance to the balance of the ecosystem. But look, they (2- *to cut down*) these trees over there! In order (3- *to stop*) such condemnable deeds, strong measures (4- *to have*) to be taken by local governments in the future for (5- *to forbid*) massive tree cuttings.