

Candidate Name:	
Registration Number:	Tutor's Code:

NATIONAL JUNIOR COLLEGE

SH2 Preliminary Examination

GENERAL PAPER

Paper 2

8806/02

2nd September 2009

1 hour 30 minutes

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READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Insert contains the passage for comprehension.

Jeffrey Sachs writes about the challenges of our generation.

- 1 I want to talk about the challenge of our generation. Ours is not the generation in which the greatest problem is the war on terror, or other ideas that are current. Our challenge, our generation's unique challenge, is learning to live peacefully and sustainably in an extraordinarily crowded world. Our planet is crowded to an unprecedented degree. It is bursting at the seams in human terms, in economic terms, and in ecological terms. This is our greatest challenge: learning to live in a crowded and interconnected world that is creating unprecedented pressures on human society and on the physical environment. We will need to solve these problems, the ones that are unique to our generation, if we are to find peace. It is a fascinating and crucial concept for us - peace as a way of solving problems. We clearly are not on a path of problem solving now; we are on a path of increasing risk and increasing instability, and by all objective measures the path of increasing hatred as well. We have not yet found a way of solving problems that our generation faces now. 5 10
- 2 The way of solving problems requires one fundamental change, a big one, and that is learning that the challenges of our generation are not us versus them, they are not us versus Islam, us versus the terrorists, us versus Iran; they are us, all of us together on this planet against a set of shared and increasingly urgent problems. By understanding those problems, understanding them at their depth, understanding what we share with every part of this world in the need to face these challenges, we can find peace. But we are living in a cloud of confusion, where we have been told that the greatest challenge on the planet is us versus them, a throwback to a tribalism that we must escape for our own survival. 15 20
- 3 We face three common problems. The first is the idea that for the first time in history the physical systems of the planet are to an incredible and unrecognised extent under human 'forcings' that now dominate a large measure of the most central ecological, chemical and bio-physical processes on the planet. Of course human 'forcings' have always played their role. We know that the hominids already controlled fire a million or more years ago, and therefore changed landscapes, even before the rise of homo sapiens. But never has the control of such fundamental processes been determined by human 'forcings', and we've barely awakened to that reality. 25 30
- 4 The second common challenge is a challenge of geo-politics. In many ways it is wonderful news. It's the notion that we have the fabulous prospect for the rapid closing of economic gaps that now exist between the rich and the poor. One result is that there will be in our time a fundamental shift of economic power, and the political power that goes along with it. We started this decade with a fantasy of the United States as the world's sole superpower, which we should have known from history always to be wrong and dangerous. China, India, and other regional powers were bound to be increasing their influence and their economic weight in the world by virtue of the shared capacity to benefit from technology, which is the foundation of economic development. Famed economist Adam Smith first talked about how global markets and international trade can be a fundamental diffusion mechanism for these technologies, and now that is happening. But we are not ready for it. 35 40 45

- 5 I want to call the third of our common challenges the challenge of the weakest links. In an interconnected world, all parts of the world are affected by what happens in all other parts of the world, and sometimes surprisingly so. In an interconnected world we have great need and basic responsibility, for our own survival, to attend to the weakest links. By that I mean those places in the world that suffer, those places in the world where people die because they are too poor to stay alive, those parts of the world which face horrific challenges to even get onto the ladder of development. The rich world seems to believe, despite all the fine speeches (and there have been many), that this doesn't really matter, because the actions of the rich countries do not begin to address this problem. We are leaving ten million people to die every year because they are too poor to stay alive. Fine speeches will not solve that problem. 50
- 6 Our challenge is to understand these common problems, to understand that a leader in Iran, or in Korea, or in Sudan, or in other places where we have made it a point not even to have a conversation, much less a negotiation or an attempt at peaceful solution, is facing problems of water supply, climate change, food production, poverty, and disease burden, many of which impinge directly on us. How can it be that we think we can be safe? We think we can be safe when we leave a billion people to struggle literally for their daily survival, the poorest billion for whom every day is a fight to secure enough nutrients, a fight against the pathogen in the water that can kill them or their child, a fight against a mosquito bite carrying malaria or another killer disease for which no medicine is available, though the medicines exist and are low cost, thus letting malaria kill one or two million children this year. How can this be safe? How many examples do we need to understand the linkages, and the common threats, and the recklessness of leaving people to die -- recklessness of spirit, of human heart, and of geo-political safety for us? 60
- 7 We are entering I believe a new politics, and potentially a hopeful politics. I'm going to call it open-source leadership. If Wikipedia and Linux can be built in an open source manner, politics can be done in that manner as well. We are going to need a new way to address and to solve global problems, but our connectivity will bring us tools unimaginable even just a few years ago. Without a global government we can still get global co-operation. It is possible to coalesce around shared goals. We are living with nineteenth and twentieth century government structures for twenty-first century problems. Our governments simply do not understand the nature of these problems. The problems cross disciplines and areas of knowledge, and inherently require cross-disciplinary and novel thinking, whether they are problems of poverty, disease, climate change, energy systems, war and peace, or Darfur. These problems cannot be left to the normal ways of operation, but that is what we are doing. That is why we see our governments flailing about blindly. We are experiencing the deep incapacities of governments to understand these challenges. We need some fundamental re-organisation. We all play a role. It doesn't just go through government, and if government remains as impervious to evidence and knowledge and capacity as it is right now, we're going to have to go increasingly around government. We are going to have to play unique roles in terms of corporate social responsibility, civil society, and as individuals as well. 80
- 8 I am an optimist, though you might not detect it! I want to stress that fundamentally we have choices, and we actually have some terrific choices. So 85

let us not be blind to our differences, but let us also direct attention to our 95
common interests, and the means by which those differences can be resolved.
And if we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world
safe for diversity, for in the final analysis our most basic common link is that we
all inhabit this small planet, we all breathe the same air, we all cherish our
children's future, and we are all mortal. 100

*Selectively adapted from The Reith Lectures 2007
Professor Jeffrey Sachs, "Bursting at the Seams"*